

THE HISTO-
ry of the Seven wise
maisters of Rome,
now newly corrected
with a pleasant stile, &
purged from all old
and rude
wordes and phrases
which were lothsome or te-
dious to the
Reader.

Imprinted at London
in Paules Churchyard by
Thomas Purfoote, dwel-
ling at the signe of
the Lucrece.

(.:.)

1576.

THE HISTORY

OF THE

REIGN OF

CHARLES THE FIRST

BY

JOHN BURNET

ESQ.

IN TWO VOLUMES

THE SECOND

VOLUME

1678

Printed at London

in Pauls Churchyard by

Thomas Foulger

Printer at the Sign of

the Crown

(M)

1678



15-8-75

Thomas Greene Gentleman

to the learned Reader,

FOr as much as there bee many of the learned which hold an opinion that the old auncient English vsed of our Brittain writers, aboue foure or five hundred yeares past, is the most naturall fynest and best English, perhaps some maye rashlye iudge the correction of this auncient historye, to be not onelye superfluous and gayne, but also iniurious to antiquitie, & the Translator thereof. Notwithstanding, the learned and discrete Reader wel considering the difference betwene the phrased of this booke & Chaucer or such other lyke, must needes manifestly discerne that although the auncient phrased of the one may bee permitted for a monumente of antiquite: yet that the disordered translation of this history might not be red without great misliking or lothsomnes to the eares of the learned or vnlearned, who had any capacitie or naturall iudgement.

To the Reader.

But that I may not seeme to fynde fault without cause, and to reprehende with reason, I will here note three speciall vanities and vices, which I founde customably disperfed in the stile of this translatour. The first is the fonde transposition and disordering of the nominatiue case and the verbe and other art of speach, wherby the sens was much obscured, as though he wold haue imitated the elocution of the latten tong, which in our english or any other lāguage is very ridiculous, except it be in certian phrases sildome to be vsed. Neither shall vve note in any old or new vvriter the like conceit but onely in this translator. The second vice is the vsing of deuised and vnknownen vvordes & displacing of good wordes out of ther righte kinde. And these ij. first faults must needes be ascribed to the translators singular error. But the thirde which is patching in of some wordes nothing partinent to the Iem and leauing out of other some, sometime by whole members of a sentence at once

To the Reader.

once: may some rather to bee attributed vnto the negligens of the printer in times past frō time to time neglecting the correction thereof, for that as I past the phrased and penning it was so rude & barbarous that very sildome but by chadce it hath bene before time vsed among Gentlemen, learned men, or the ciuill sorte: but onely of the common multitude, whereas in deede for the pleasauntnes, & witty narration contained in the history, the best learned in the Vniuersitye or the finest head in all the court may well seeme and thinke no time ill spent, to bestow the reading thereof. Wherefore the Printer for a publike commoditie, by the aduice of some friendes, (this considering) not as chusing the best, but with whome hee thought he might be bold, requested mee to peruse it throughout, which I haue don according to my simple skill, by voyding and correcting the iii. faults before specified.

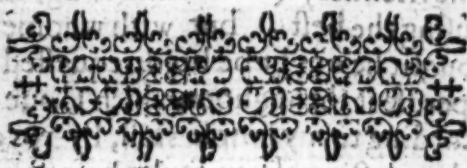
Neuertheles I haue not so much coue-
ted

To the Reader.

red to enterlate such fine and eloquente
english as manye haue ysed in our tyme,
but rather to match the newe peece with
the olde garmente as neare as mighte, be-
cause I had in correction most respecte to
perspicuity and brenitie in a history most
agreeable and conueniente, wherefore
gentle and learned Reader, I shall desyre
thee to take this my bolde enterprise
in good part, & if thou find ought
amisse, charitably to correct
the same, and to beare
with my error *cum*

fit humu-

num.



Here

Here beginneth the History
of the seuen wyse maisters of Rome,
containing many pleasaunt and witty
Narrations, and delectable to
the Reader.



Some tyme in the
cittie of Rome was an
Emperour named Dom-
itianus, a man of great
wisedome, hee tooke to
his wife a kings daughter, that was
very fayre, amiable, to all people
gracious, and to her husbände righte
deare. Shee conceiuing of him was
deliuered of a sonne named Doro-
sian. The childe grew, & of all peo-
ple was beloued, & when he was of
the age of seuen yeares, his mother
the Empress falling sore sick, & feling
her selfe that she might not liue, sente
after her lord the emperour a messen-
ger, & he shuld come without tarrying
if euer he should see her on lyue. And

A.iiii.

when

The seven wyse

when he was come, shee sayde vnto
him. O my Lorde, of this infyrmitie
may I not escape, wherefore I hum-
blye requyre you of a little Petition,
before my death. He answered, de-
syre what you will, for I shal not de-
nye you any thing. Then sayd she, af-
ter my death, ye shall take another
wife, as is most conuenient, wherefore
I instantly beseech you, y shee ouer
my Sonne haue no power, or Go-
uernance, but that hee be kepte and
nourished far from her, and that hee
may be trained vp in learning, and
willedome. The Emperour then an-
swered. My most deate wyfe, your
petition in all thinges shall be fulfil-
led and performed. Then turned the
Empress, & gaue by the ghoſte. Ma-
ny dayes after the Emperour beway-
led and mourned her death, & long
time after her burying hee shewed
his heavines and sorow, and would
in no wise marry or be ioyfull.

Holo

maysters.

How the Emperour committed and deli-
uered his sonne to the seuen wise may-
sters to be instructed in learning.

Vpon a time as the Emperour laye
in his bedde, hee bethoughte him
inwardlye of his sonne, saying in his
hart, I haue onely but one sonne the
which shal be mine heire. It is good
whiles he is yong, that he be set to
learne cunning and wisdom, by the
which he may after my death, go-
uerne and rule the Empyre, so that
whē he was early risen vp from his
bed, he caused to be called the Lords
of his counceyl, & of them tooke aduise
what was best therein to bee done.
And they answered Lord, in Rome
are seuen wise maysters, who excell
& exceede all other men in cunning
and literature, let them be sent for, &
deliuer to thē your sonne to be fostred
and instructed in learning. That
vnderstanding the Emperour sent
his letters sealed with his seale to the
seuen

The seven wyse

seven maisters, y they incontinentlye
should come to him without delaye,
And they anone came before the em-
peror, & he demaunded of them if they
knew wherfore that he had sente for
them: they answered, the cause is as
your will intendeth, we knowe not,
but if it please you to shewe vs your
minde & intent we be ready to fulfill
it to the vttermost of our powers, to
whom the noble Emperor sayde, I
haue but one sonne, the which I shal
deliuer vnto you to nourishe and to
teache, so that by your doctrine, and
wisedome, he may the more wiselye
guide & gouerne the Emprye, after
my decease. The fyrst maister named
Bantillas sayd, Lorde deliuer to me
your sonne, and I shall teach him as
much cunning within .vii. yeares, as
I & al my fellowes can. Then spake
the .ii. Maister, y was named Lenu-
lus, sye of long time I haue serued
you, & hitherto I haue had no manner
of

maysters.

of rewarde, I demaunde nothing
else of you, but y^e ye deliuer mee your
son to learn & gouerne, and I shall
make him as cunning within fyre
yeare, as I & all my fellowes be, the
iii. Maister saide, whose name was
Craton. My lord many tymes haue
I bene with you vpon the sea, in per-
rill of my life, and of you haue I had
no maner of rewarde, if that I might
for my recompence nowe, obtaine y^e
ye will vouchsafe to committe youre
some vnder my rule & gouernance I
should informe him as much within
v. yeares, if his witte thereto will at-
taine, as I & my fellowes can. Then
stode by the.iii. master, that had to
name Malquidrake, who was right
leane of body, & said. My Lorde call
to your remembraunce how that I &
al my predecessors haue serued Em-
perours, & haue receiued no manner
of rewarde, wherefore I shall aske
none other thing, but y^e yee will deli-
uer

The seven wyse

uer me your son to informe & teache
& I shall make him to take as much
science & wisdom within iii. yeres,
as I and all my fellowes haue lear-
ned in all our liues, then spake the
fifte Maister, that was named Jo-
sephus, Lord: I am olde, and many
times I am called to your counsell,
and you know that my counsel hath
auailed and profited you, and so yet
in like wise may hereafter, not with-
standing I desyre no more, but that
you will deliuer me your sonne, and
I shall instructe, and informe him in
as much cunning and science, that
he within three yeaeres shall profit in
wit as much as I and al my felowes
Then came forth the sixt Maister, &
was named Cleophas, whiche sayd
like the other, promising him to learn
and informe the Chylde in all theire
cunning within ii. yeaeres. The vii.
maister rose vp and said, which also
desired the Chylde, & promised for to
learne

maysters.

teache learne him within one yeare, the sci-
ences & wisedome of them all. when
all this was done, the Emperoure
said, my trusty friendes, I am much
bounden to thanke you al, and euery
of you, for that you haue so earnestly
with contention desyred to foster &
instruct my sonne. If I shoulde now
commit him to one, and not to an o-
ther, therof shoulde nowe insue much
dissention & variaunce amongst you
Therefore to you al, and euery of you
I commit my sonne to be nourished, &
taught. The maisters hearing this,
with greate thankes giuing to the
Emperour, toke & receiued his sonne,
and led him towarde the courte of
Rome. Upon the way spake Craton
to his fellowes. If we this Chylde
shoulde teache within the Cittye of
Rome, there is so great resorte and
concourse of people, that it shoulde
hinder and lette him in his learning.
I knowe a fayre place from Rome
iii. myle

The seven wyse

iii. mile, right pleasant and Delectable
there let vs make a.iiii. square cham-
ber of stone, and put him therein, and
vpon the walles of that syde let vs
painte and write the. vii. artes libe-
rall, so that the child at al tymes may
see and beholde therein his Doctryne,
as well as in his booke, and this ad-
uise and counsell pleased them all, &
was done according in euerye poynt
The maisters dilligently euerye day
during vii. yeare taught and instruc-
ted the chylde, and then determined
among themselues and sayde, it is
good that wee examine our Disci-
ple how he is sped in running, and
science. They al accorded to the same
Then sayd maister Pantillas, howe
shall we proue him, Craton sayde, let
euery of vs as he sleapeth, put vnder
euery corner of his bed, an Oliue
leafe, and then we shall know if hee
perceiued or felte anye thing or not,
this don, he waking, greatly meruei-
led

maysters.

led and lifted vp his eyne toward the
rooſe of the chamber feruentlye, the
maisters ſeing that ſayde, wherefore
liſt you vp your eyne ſo ſharpelye? he
anſwered it is no maruayle, for in
my ſleepe I ſaw the vppermoſt parte
of the chamber inclined toward the
earth, or elle vnder mee it was liſte
vp, the maisters hearing this, ſayd a-
mong themſelues, if this chylde may
liue, he ſhall be a man of greate cun-
ning and fame.

How the Emperour by the counſell of the
great Princes and Lordes of his Em-
pyre wedded another wife.

The Princes & great Lordes of
the Empire in the meane tyme
came to the Emperour, & ſayd.
My Lord ye haue onely but one ſon,
it is poſſible that he might happen to
die, and therefore it were profitable
ſ ye ſhould wed another wiſe to en-
gender and make mo children, to the
euent that the Empire of Rome bee
not

The seuen wyse

not left without an heyre, moreouer
ye are so mighty & if it should happen
you to get many Children, yee maye
promote & aduance them al to greate
dignitie and Lordshippes . There-
vpon answered the Emperoure. It
is your counsell that I shall take an
other wise, then seeke me one that is
gracious, a pure virgin, fayre, & gen-
tle borne, and then shall I followe
your counsell and aduise, they went
and sought and serched many King-
domes and landes, & at the last they
founde the Kinges daughter of Ca-
still, that was right fayre and bew-
tifull, and her they gaue themperour
to wife, who behaued her so well, &
anone hee was taken so sore in her
loue, that he forgat all the heauinesse
and sorow of his harte, that hee had
taken for the death of his fyrste wyfe.
And when they had liued long to-
gether without Chyldren. And the
Empresse well saw & she mighte not
conceaue

conceale. Then when she heard that
the Emperour had a count with seuen
uery wyse maysters to be folowed and
taught, to beholde a profite of & Em-
perre, she thought in her selfe, and im-
aged his death. And from that houre
forth, she imagined how she might
conspire his death. It happened
on a night as the Emperour lay in his
bed, he said to the Empress, my moste
deare & best beloved wife, I shall now
open unto you the secretes
of my harte, for under the Sonne is
there no creature, that I loue so well
as you, and therefore trust in my loue.
The said the faire & noble Empresse,
if he should say, I requyre you of
one little boune or petition. I desire
what ye will, sayde the Emperoure,
and all that to me is possible, I shall
fulfill and gine it you. Then sayde
the Empresse. My right deare Lorde
as you knowe I haue no chylde by you
yet conceaued, wherefore I am sore

The sevenwyle

pentine, and cheamy, but it is shewed
 that ye have one sonne onely, the
 which is called to the seven wyle. May
 it be taught and gouerned, &
 that hold. I her pite for myne owne
 sonne, wherfore I beseech you that
 ye will send for him that I maye see
 him, & haue consolation of his pro-
 sence, as though he were myne owne.
 Thereupon answered the Emperour
 that he had passed, that I him
 had sent, & he would be with you.
 In muche time he to the se-
 uen wyle. A letter sealed with his
 secret figure, that upon paine of death
 they should bring his sonne to the
 feast of admittance of his sonne, &
 then next following. And thus
 the Emperour. Now the seven wise masters after the sight
 of the Emperours letter would first take the
 course of the firmament and planets,
 whether it were good to obey
 his commaundementes
 or not.

AND as the maister the letter had
 read, and had vnderstoode the will
 of the Emperour, in the night they
 went, and saw vpon the Starres of
 the firmament whether it should be
 expediente to take the iourney with
 the Chylde after the emperours boile
 or not. Who saue clearely in the
 Starres, that if they shoulde leade
 the chylde in that tyme assigned, at
 the fyrste wynde that hee shoulde
 speake, he shoulde dye an euill death
 wherof they were all sore, and
 as they beheld another starre, they
 saue, that if they deliuered not the
 Chylde at the daye aforesayde they
 shoulde leese their heades, then said
 one of them, of two euils the leaste
 is to be chosen, it is better that we all
 dye, then the Chylde shoulde leese
 his lyfe, therefore that we may saue
 the chyldes lyfe, let vs go to the Em-
 perour. And as they were thus sit-
 ting to fulfill the child came down fro the

The seven wyse

chamber & saw his maisters loze head
up he demanded the the cause of their
heaviness, whereupon they answered
that they had receiued your fathers
letters vpon payn of death, that
now in this high feast of penitence,
we should leade you to your countrey
whereupon we haue beholden the fir-
mament, wherein we clearly see and
finde, that if we within the tyme be-
fore prescribed, presente you to your fa-
ther, at the first word that ye shal pro-
nounce out of your mouth, ye shall be
to the moste vilest death condemned.
Then sayd the chylde, I must also be-
hold the firmament with the starres,
and so he did, and found & saw clere-
ly in a litle starre, that if he could ab-
staine from speaking seven dayes, he
should be preserued and saue his life.
And after he this had seene, he called
his maysters, and shewed them the
starre and said behold my deare mai-
sters, I see perfectly in the starre that

Maysters.

if I abstaine my selfe by the space of
vii. dayes, I shall saue my lyfe. ye are
now, vii. Maisters, the wysest of the
world. It is a little thing to you, that
euery of you, for me one day doe aun-
swere, & with your wise and were eue-
ry of you his day, my life may saue &
kepe, & I in the viii. day shall speake
for my selfe, and shall saue my lyfe,
and all you from perrill. As the may-
sters had beholden that certayn star,
they iudged in them that the chylde
had sayd troth, saying, almighty God
be thanked, that the wisdom and
cunning of our Disciple exceedeth vs
all. Then spake the fyrst master Ban-
tillas, Lord, I shal speake for you the
fyrst day & saue your lyfe, and Len-
tulus the second mayster sayd, I shall
for you the second day aunswere, and
so consequently euery of them promi-
sed to aunswere for him his day, and
this sayde, they clothed the Chylde in
purple, and lept to horseback with a

The seven vñse
fayre company, and hasted the wyth
the chylde towardes the Emperoure.

How the Emperour rode to meete
his sonne comming from his
studie with great pompe
and pryde.

When the Emperoure perceaued
that his sonne was conuining vp
on the way, he rode with greates ioye
to meete him, the maisters understan-
ding the conuining of the Emperour,
sayd to the chylde it is best that wee
depart, and in the meane whyle, wee
maye promyde howe wee maye saue
your lyfe, the chylde saide it pleaseth
mee thrt you do so, but haue nrynd on
me, in tyme of my necessitie. So they
tooke their leaue and departed, to-
wardes the cittie, the Chylde came
after accompanyed right honoura-
ble. And as he and his father the em-
perour were met, for ioye and glad-
nes, he tooke him about the neck and
kissed him & said, my deare son, howe
is

Is it with you, it is long since that I
 sawe you, he bowed downe his
 head and answered nothing, the fa-
 ther had great wonder why that hee
 spake not, & thought in himselfe that
 his Maisters had him so informed,
 that he riding should not speake, and
 when they were come unto the Pa-
 laice, and were descended from their
 horses, the father tooke his sonne by
 the hande, and ledde him into the hall
 and set him next him, & he heard him,
 & sayde: saye me how it is with your
 maisters, & how they haue informed
 you, for now is maue peares syth I
 sawe you, hee inclyned downe his
 head, & gaue no answer, the father
 sayde, wherfore speake ye not to me.
 And when the Emperes heard that
 the Emperours son was come, she was
 right ioyous & glad, & said, I will go
 to see him, she apparrailed her wth
 riche besture, & attyre, toke with her
 two of her gentlewoman, & wet there

The sechen wyse

as the Emperour was sitting wth
his sonne, she sette her downe by the
chylde, and she sayd to the Emperour,
is this your sonne that hath bene nou-
rished with the vii. wise maisters, and
he sayde it is my sonne, but hee spea-
keth not, she sayd belme to me poure
son, & if euer he speake, I shall make
him to speake, then sayde the Empe-
rour, ryse and go wth her, the sonne
did reuerence to the father, as though
he sayde, I am ready to accomplishe
your will, and went wth her.

How the Empresse ledde Dioclesian the
Emperours sonne with her into her cham-
ber, for to make good cheare with him,
the which he withstoode.

The Empresse ledde him wth her
into her chamber, and commande-
ded all oth^r to auyde, and sette him
by her afore her bed, and sayd, O my
best beloued Dioclesia, I haue heard
much of your person and beuote, but
now I am glad that I may see you
wth

Maysters.

woyth mine even that my hact coulde
teth & loneth, for I haue caused your
father to send for you, that I mighte
haue solace & ioy of your persō, wher-
fore I without fault giue you know-
ledge that I for your loue vnto this
day, haue kepte my virginittie, speake
to me and let vs go to bedde together
but he gaue her no word to answer:
she seing y^e sayd to him. O good Dio-
clesian, whiche haste the halfe of my
soule, wherefore speake ye not to me,
or at the least shew me sonie token of
loue, what shall I doe, speake to mee,
I am ready to fulfill and perfourme
your wil, and when she had thus said
she embraced him and woulde haue
kissed his mouth, & he tourned his vi-
sage from her, and in no wyse would
consent, then sayd she agayne to hym,
O sonne, wherefore do ye thus with
me, behold there is none that may see
vs, let vs slepe together, and then it al
ye well perceiue, that for your loue I
haue

The seuen wyse

hane kept my virginite, and he turned his visage from her, she seeing & he was of her ashamed, shewed vnto him her naked body and brestes, and sayde, behold my sonne what body I haue at your will, giue me your consent, or else it shall be harde for me to passe w my right minde. He neyther with signe or with countenaunce of visage shewed her any manner of loue but as much as he could withdrawe him from her, when shee sawe that she said. O my mooste sweete sonne, if it please you not to consent to mee, ne yet speake, perhaps for some reasonable cause, loe here is paper, pen, and ynke, if you will not speake with your mouth, then wyte your will, If I any tyme hereafter make trust in your loue or not, the Chylde wrote as herafter followeth, O Lady, God forbid that I shoulde defyle my Father's Orchard, for I wote not what fruite I should haue of it. I knowe well

maisters.

well one thing, that I shoulde sinne
in the sighte of God, and also run in
the malediction of my father, and
therefore from henceforth prouoke or
stirre me no more thereto, when shee
had seene a red y writing, shee brake
it with her teeth, and rent her cloathes
with her nayles to her namill, and all
to scratched her visage, untill it was
all bloody, & cast from her al the Or-
naments of her head, & cryed with a
loude voyce, come heether my Lordes
& helpe me, afore that this rude and
guill body shame and rauishe me.

How the Empresse complayned to the
Emperour of the shame to hir
by his sonne.

The Emperour was in his Hall,
and hearing the crye, and noyse
of the Empresse, he hastily ranne to-
wardes his chāber with his knights
and other of his Seruantes follo-
wing him, for to see what was
the matter, then beganne the Em-
presse

The seven wyse

preſſe to cry , & to ſpeake to the Em-
perour in this wiſe . O my Lorde
haue pittie and compaſſion vpon me,
beholde this yong man is not your
ſonne, but the fouleſt Ribaude & har-
lot that euer was borne, and a deſy-
ler of women, for as you knowe well
I ledde and broughte him with mee
into my chaumber, & ſhould haue ex-
horted and cauſed him to haue ſpo-
ken. I haue done as much thereto as
I can or maye, & whyles I with my
wordes exhorted and moued him, for
to haue ſpoken, hee hath endeouored
himſelfe with me to haue ſinned, and
becauſe I would not to him conſent
but withſtoode as much as I mighte
for to flee the ſhame , hee hath made
my Viſage all bloodye , and hath
all to torne my Veſture and Orna-
ments of my heade, as ye maye open-
lye ſee . And if ye had not ſo ſoone
come vnto my calling, he had accom-
pliſhed in mee his mooste foule and
wicked

Maysters.

woicked appetite : when the Empe-
rour sawe & hearde this , filled with
greate malice & wodnes, he commaun-
ded his seruantes that they should
leade him to the gallowes and hange
him. And when his Lordes hearde
thereof, they sayde: Lord ye haue no
mo but this sonne onlye . It is not
good that ye thus lightly put hym
to death, the lawe is ordayned for
transgressors and misdoers: and if it
be so that he must dye, let hym by the
lawe dye, leaste that it be sayde that
the Emperour in his great fury and
prie, withoute lawe and iustice, hath
put his onely sonne to deathe. As the
Emperour heard this, he commaun-
ded him to be put in prison vnto the
tyme that iudgement were giuen a-
gainste him . And when the Em-
presse vnderstande that the Chylde
was not put to death, shee cryed and
weeped bitterlye , and woulde haue
no rest, when the nighte was come,
the

The fruen wyfe

the Emperour entered into his chamber to go to bed, and found his wyfe weeping and sorrowing, to whome he sayde: O mynnoft deare Lady for what cause are ye thus sorrowful, she answered: Know ye not howe that your curled soun hath done me thus much shame, and me so offended, ye haue comanded him to be hanged, and he liueth, and your worde is not performed, neither is my shame requenged. To morrowe sayde the Emperour he shal dye by the lawe, then sayd she, shal he so long liue, then might it happen to you as it did vpon a Burges of Rome, of whome an example is mentioned, the Emperour said, I praye you shewe me that example, that shall I doe gladly said the Emperesse. The first example of the Emperesse. In the citty of Rome was a Burges, the which had a fayre chaste Daine

Dayrie, wherein he had standing a noble tree, the whiche euerye yeare brought forth fruite of great vertue; for whosoever eate thereof, that were sicke of anye manner of sickness, as of Lepre, or any other, hee shoulde soone bee whole and receiue his health. It happened vppon a day that the Burges wente into his garden to visite the tree, and espyed vnder the tree a fayre yonge impe, he called to him the Gardiner, and sayde: My friende of this yonge Impe I giue thee charge, for I trust of that to plant a better tree then this is; the gardiner sayd I shall it gladly doe. Another tyme the Burges came againe into his Gardaine, to visite this yonge plante, and it appeared to him that it grewen as much as it shoulde doe; and saide to the gardiner, how may this be: and hee sayd it is no wonder, for this great tree hath so great armes, and braunches

The seven myse

branches, that the ayre maye not
come to the roote of the yong Tree:
then said the Burges cut and hewe
of the armes, and the Bowes, that
the ayre may come thereto, the gar-
diner did as hee was commaunded.
The Burges came againe another
time for to see his yong Plante, and
thought that it grewe neuer the bet-
ter, and sayd to the Gardener, what
is it that letteth this plante to grow,
now. And then he sayde I suppose
the heighth of the old tree letteth the
houne and the rayne may not come
thereto, and therefore it cannot grow.
Then sayde the Mayster to him,
hew downe the Tree by the ground
for I hope of this Plante to have
a better then ever this was. The
Gardiner hearing his mayster obser-
ued him, & he hewed downe the tree,
and as soone as this was done, the
yong plant all wholly perished, and
came to naught, wherfore came gret
harme,

Maysters.

harne, for when the poore and the sicke people perceiued that the tree was so destroyed, they cursed al them that were as counsellours & helpers thereto, by the which they all afore time were healed and cured of their infirmities & maladies. Then sayde the Emperesse, vnderstand ye what I haue said: he aunswored, yes, right well, then said she, I shall declare to you the meaning of þ I haue said.

The declaration of the
Example.

This tree my Lorde, betokeneth your moste noble person, howe that with your counsaile and helpe many poore & sicke folke are greatly holpen and comforted. And the yong Impe that is growne vnder the great tree, is your cursed sonne, that now by his cunning beginneth to grow, and studieth how he myste may cut of the armes and bowes of your might, & how to win to him þ

C.i.

lande

The seven myse

braunches, that the ayre maye not
come to the roote of the yong Tree:
then said the Burges cut and hewe
of the armes, and the Bowes, that
the ayre may come thereto, the gar-
diner did as hee was commaunded.
The Burges came againe another
time for to see his yong Plante, and
thought that it grewe neuer the bet-
ter, and sayd to the Gardener, what
is it that letteth this plante to grow,
now. And then he sayde I suppose
the heighth of the old tree letteth the
sunne and the rayne may not come
thereto, and therefore it cannot grow.
Then sayde the Mayster to him,
hew downe the Tree by the ground
for I hope of this Plante to haue
a better then ever this was. The
Gardiner hearing his mayster, obe-
ed him, & he hewed downe the tree,
and as soone as this was done, the
yong plant all wholly perished, and
came to naught, wherfore came gret
harme,

Maysters.

harme, for when the poore and the sicke people perceiued that the tree was so destroyed, they cursed al them that were as counsellours & helpers thereto, by the which they all afore time were healed and cured of their infirmities & maladies. Then sayde the Emperesse, vnderstand ye what I haue said: he aunswored, yes, righte well, then said she, I shall declare to you the meaning of þ I haue said.

The declaration of the
Example.

This tree my Lorde, betokeneth your moste noble person, howe that with your counsaile and helpe many poore & sicke folke are greatly holpen and comforted. And the yong Impe that is growne vnder the great tree, is your cursed sonne, that now by his cunning beginneth to grow, and studieth how he fyrste may cut of the armes and bowes of your might, & how to win to him þ
C.i. lande

The senen wyse

land and fauour of the people, yea,
þ more vnnat urally he imagineth to
destroy your person, that he may him
selfe ra:gn, but what shall then issue
thereof, all pooze and feeble people
shall curse all them the which might
haue destroyed your sonne, and haue
not done it, therefore I counsaill you
whyles you are in your power, and
liuing, that ye destroy him, least that
the curse of the people fall vpon you.
Then sayd the Emperour, yee haue
geuen me good counsell, to morrowe
I shall condemne him to the moste
vilest death that can be thoght, whe
the day was come, the Emperoure
went & sate in the iudgement, & com-
manded his seruants þ they shoulde
leade his Sonne to be hanged wyth
trôpets blowing, in token of death.
And as the Emperors son was lead
through the Cittie, the common peo-
ple began to weepe & crye, alas the
onely sonne of the Emperour is lead
to wardes

Maysters.

towardes his death, & therewithall
came Pantillas the fyrst mayster ri-
ding vpon a horse: when the chylde
saw him, he bowed his head to him,
as though he had sayd, haue mynde
vpon me, when ye come before my
father, see how I am lead towardes
the galloues, then the mayster sayd
to the sernaunts, make no hast for I
hope by the grace of God, this day to
deliuer him from the deth, then sayd
all the people, O good mayster haste
you to the pallaice, & saue your disci-
ple, he smot þ horse with the spurres
till he came to the pallaice & kneeled
before the emperour, and did him re-
nerence. To whome the Emperour
saide, it shall neuer be to thee good,
which answered, I haue deserued
a better rewarde, the emperour sayd
there þ lyest, for I deliuered him to
thee, in all thing well manered, and
now he is dumme, and that worse is
he would haue oppressed my wyfe,

C.ii.

there.

The senen wyfe

therefore this Day he shall dye, & yee
all shall dye a shamefull Death: the
maisters said: O Lorde as for your
son for as much as he speaketh not,
the cause thereof knoweth God, and
without cause it is not, as yee shall
vnderstand, & that ye say more þ hee
would haue defyled your empres, I
shall say you of a troth, he hath bene
in our company by the space of .xvi.
yeres, and we neuer could perceaue
such thinges by him. And therefore
my deare Lord I shal shew you one
thing, that if you put your sonne to
death, for the wordes of your wyfe,
it should happen to you, worse the to
a knight, the which killed his beste
gryphounde, through the wordes of
his wyfe, which saued his sonne fro
the Death, then sayd the Emperour,
to the Maister, tell me that Exāple.
The mayster said, Lord that shall I
not doe, for before I could make an
end therof, your son might be dead,
and

maysters.

and then in vaine & withoute feldite,
I should rehearse it, but if it pleaseth
you this notable Example to heare,
call again your sonne till to morrow
and as ye thinke by reason, then doe
with him your pleasure, as the Em-
perour heard that, anone hee willed
the chyld to be called Gaime, and in
the meane tyme he set him in prison,
whiles the maister should finish his
tale, and then he began to say in such
manner as followeth.

The Example of the fyrst

Mayster.

There was a valyaunt knight
which had onely one sonne, as
ye haue, the which hee loued
so much, that he ordained for his ke-
ping three Nourishers, the fyrste
should giue him suck, and fede him,
the second should washe him & keepe
him cleane, the thyrde shoulde bring
him to sleepe and rest. This knight
had also a Greyhounde and a faw-

C.iii.

con,

The seven wyse

con, that hee also loued righte well,
The greyhound was so good, that
he neuer raine at any game, but hee
tooke it, and held it till his mayster
came. And if his mayster disposed
him to go to battayle, if hee shoulde
not speede in the battayle, anone as
he should alunte vppon his horse,
the greyhound would take the houle
taile in his mouth, and drawe back-
ward, & would also crye and rowle
maruailous loud. By these signs the
knight vnderstoode if that he shoulde
speede in his tourney or not, the faw-
con was so gentle and so hardy, that
he was neuer cast to his pray but he
tooke it.

This same knight had greate plea-
sure in iustynge & tournynge, so that
vpon a tyme vnder his castell he pro-
claimed a tournament, to the which
came many good Lords & knights.
The knight entered into the Tour-
ney, and his Lady went with her
maydens

maysters.

maydens to see it, and as they went out, after went the Flourishers, and left the chylde lying there alone in the cradell in the hall, where the Greyhound lay nigh the wall, and that Hauke or Faucon standing vppon a perche. In this hall there was a serpent lurking or hid in a hole, to all them of the Castell unknowne. The which when he perceiued that they were all absent, he put his head oute of his hole, and when he sawe none but the chylde lying in the Cradell, hee wente out of his hole towarde the Cradell, for to haue slayne the chylde. The Noble Faucon seing that, and beholding the Greyhounde that was sleeping, made suche a noyse and rusteling with her wings & feathers, that the Greyhounde awooke and rose vp, & when he sawe the Serpent nigh the chylde, anone againste him he lepte, and they both foughte so long together, till that the

The seven wyse

the Serpent had greuously hurted
& wounded the Greyhound, that he
bled sore so that the earth about the
cradell was all be bledde wyth the
bloud of the greyhound. The grey-
hound when that he felt himselfe so
greeuously hurt and wounded, start
fiersely vpon the Serpent, & fought
so sore together, and so egerly, that
betwene them the cradell was ouer-
tost with the chyld the bottoome vp-
warde. And because that the cradell
had foure pomeles lyke feete falling,
towarde the earth, they saued the
chylde's life, & his bilage from any hur-
ting, & tohat that they more, incon-
tinent thereafter with great paine,
the Greyhound ouercaste and slew
the serpent, and wont and lande him
downe agayne in his place, and li-
ked his woundes.

And anon after as the iustes and
toorney was done, the flourishers
were the fyzt that came into the ca-
stell

maysters.

fel, & as they saw the cradell turned
vpsidown, myrrored with blood vpon
þe earth, & that the grethound was
also bloudy, they thought and sayde
amonges themselues that the grey-
hound had slaine the chyld, and they
were not so wyse as to tourne bp a-
gaine the cradell with the Childe for
to haue seene what was thereof be-
faller. But they sayde, let vs flee or
run away, least þ our maister put or
lay the blame vpon vs, and sleye vs,
as they were thus running awaye,
they met with the knyghts wyfe, and
she said to them, wherefore make yee
this sorrow, & whither will yee run,
and they sayde: O Lady, woe & sor-
rowe be to vs and to you, why sayde
she what is there happened, she we-
me, the Greyhound they sayde, that
our Lord & mayster loueth so much,
hath deuoured and slayne your son,
and lyeth by the wall all full of the
blood, as the Lady this hearde, she
fell

The seven wyse

fell to the earth, and began to weepe
and crye pitiously, and sayde, alas.
O my deare sonne be ye thus slayne,
and deade, what shall I now do
that I haue my onely Sonne thus
lost, here withall came in the knyghte
from the tourney, and beholding his
Ladye thus crying and making sor-
rowe, he demaunded of her where-
fore that she made so great sorrowe
and lamentation, shee answered
him, O my Lorde your greyhounde
that ye loue so much hath slaine your
onely sonne, and lyeth by the wall
satiated with the blood of the Chylde,
the knyghte vehementlye angryd,
wente into the Hall, and the Grey-
hounde wente to meete him, and
fawne as he was wont to doe. And
the knyght drew out his Sworde
and with one stroke smote of the
Greyhoundes head and went to the
Cradel and found his sonne all whole,
and by the cradell the serpent slaine,
and

maysters.

and by diuers signes perceyued that the Greyhound had fought againste the Serpente for the defence of the chylde. Then with great sorow and weeping he tare his heare, and sayde wo be to me , that for the woordes of my wyfe, I haue slayn my good Greyhound, the whiche hath saued my Chyldes lyfe, and hath slaine the Serpente, therefore I will put my selfe to penaunce , and brake his sword in thre pee:es, and wente towarde the holy land , and abode there all the dayes of his lyfe : then sayd the mayster to the Emperoure, Lorde vnderstand yee what I haue said & he answered & said right well. The maister saide, if that yee doe put your sonne to death, for the wordes of your wyfe , It shall come to you worse then it did to y knight for his greyhound. The Emperour sayd yee haue shewed mee a fayre Example, and without doubt this day shal not
my

The seuen wyse
my sonne die: then said the mayster,
if you do so, ye do wisely, but I thak
you that ye haue him spared this day
for my sake.

The second complaint of the
Empresse.

When that the Empresse heard þ
the chylde was not yet dead, shee
began to weepe bitterly, and late her
downe vpon þ earth in ashes, & would
not hold by her head, as the Empe-
rour heard þ, he entered into þ Cha-
ber, & said to hir, O good wife wher
fore make ye al this sorow, & trouble
your selfe so much. She said demaund
ye that of me, knowe you not well
what great despighte and shame I
haue suffered of your vnhappy sonne
& how ye haue promised me, that you
would see iustice to bee therefore on
him executed, & yet he liueth, of troth
it shal happen to you as it happened
to a sheapheard and a bore, The em-
perour said, I pray you shew me the
example

maysters.

example for my learning, as she sayd
yester daye, I shewed one and sawe
none effect that therof came, to what
entent shoulde I now do þ lyke. Ne-
uertheles I shall declare this nota-
ble example vnto you, as hereafter
you shall heare.

The seconde Example of the

Empresse.

There was somtyme an emperour
the whiche had a great forreste,
wherein was a Boze that was so
cruell and so fell, that manie going
through the forest he killed and de-
uoured. The Emperour being ther-
fore righte heauye, Proclaymed
throughoute all his Empyre, that
whosoever hee was that coulde slea
the Boze, shoulde haue his onelye
Daughter to wyfe, and thereto hys
Empyre after his death, and as this
was in all places proclaimed, there
was not one man found that durste
giue the aduenture, then was there

a

The seven wyse

a Sheapehearde whiche in himselfe
thought, might I this bore slea, and
winne: I should not onely aduance
my selfe, but also all my generatiō
and kindred; so he tooke his sheepe-
hardes staffe in his hand, and went
to the forrest. And as the Bore had
of him a sighte, hee drew him to-
wardes the heardman, and he for
feare clymied vpon a tree, then the
Bore began to byte and gnawe the
tree, so that the heard thought short-
lye that he should haue ouerthrowne
it. This tree was laden with greate
plenty of fruite, the heard gathered
and plucked therof, and cast them
to the Bore, in so much that when
he filled him therewith, he layde him
downe to sleepe, the whiche the
heard perceauing, by little and little
descended, and with the one hande
he clawed the Bore, and with the o-
ther, healde himselfe on the Tree,
and seeing that the Bore slept sound-

maysters.

ly and faste, DREW out his knyfe and
smote the boze to the harte, and kil-
led him, & so consequently wedded þ
emperours daughter to his wyfe,
& after the deth of her father, he was
made emperour, the sayd she my lord
wot ye not what. I haue said, he said
right well, then saide shee this migh-
ty boze betokeneth your moste noble
person, againste whome maye no
man wythstande, neither by wise-
dome, ne with strength, this sheape-
hearde with his staffe, is the person
of your vngracious sonne, whiche
with hys staffe of cunring, beginneth
to playe with you as the heardeman
clawed the Boze, and made him to
sleepe and after killed him, in þ same
manner the maysters of your sonne
by their false fables and narrations,
claw you and glose with you, vntill
the tyme that your son slay you, þ he
may reign, then said the Emperour,
God forbid þ they should do to mee
as

The seven wyse

as they did to the Boze, and sayd vn-
to her, this day my son shalbe deade,
and she answered, if you do so, ye do
wysely. Then the Emperour the se-
cond tyme sitting in iudgement, com-
maunded to leade him to the Gallo-
wes and hang him. And whyle shee
was going, the second mayster came
before the Emperour, doing him reue-
rence, as it is before shewed in the
coming of the first maister, to whom
the second mayster said, O my lord
Emperour if ye should so slaye youre
sonne for the wordes of your wife, it
might worse come to you, then it did
to a knight, whiche for the woordes
of his wyfe, was vniustlye put on a
pillery, the Emperour said, O good
mayster tel me how it happened, and
he said. My lord I shall not saye it
but that you will go call your sonne,
from the death, vnto the tyme that
the example be tolde, the whiche if it
tourne you not from your purpose,
your

your will be fulfilled. The Empe-
rour commaunded that the Chylde
should be called agayne. And vnder
this manner that followeth, the se-
conde mayster began to tell.

The Example of the second Mayster.

¶ A cittie was an auncient knight
which wedded a yong wyfe, & a
fayre, as ye haue done, whome he lo-
ued aboue all earthly thinges. This
knight was a very circumspect & care-
full husband, in so much that euery
night he locked euery dore in þe house
wth his own handes, & laide the keyes
vnder his bedes head; in þe cittie was
a lawe or custome, that at a certayne
houre in the night a bell was vsed to
be rung, that after the ringing of the
said bel, if anye men or women were
by the watchmen founde vppon the
streates all that night should they be
kept fast in prisō, and on the morow
set vpon a pillerye; that all people
might behold & wonder vpon them.

The seven wyfe

this foresaid knight had little minde
or lust of fleshy deedes, for that hee
was olde and might not faciate, or
performe the desyres and appetites
of his yong wyfe, wherefore euerye
night, she hauing a Paramoure, her
husbande sleeping tooke the keyes,
and went to her loue, and when shee
came againe, all priuily shee layde
the keyes againe vnder her husbands
head, and thus playde shee manye
tymes, it befell vppon a nighte that
the knight awaked out of his sleepe
and missed his wyfe, and also the
keyes vnder his head were away, he
arose vp, and went to the doores, and
found them open, the which he closed
and bolted within fast, and then
went vp againe into his chamber, and
looked out at the windowe towards
the streete, And when it was by
the daye, about the thyrde cocks crowd
his wyfe came from her best beloued,
and founde the doze shut and bolted
within,

May sters.

with in, then was she sorrowfull ne-
uerthelesse she knocked to haue come
in, then spake the knight oute of the
wyndowe, O thou moste euill and
uncleane wife now I knowe and
am expectt that many a time thou hast
forsaken my bed, and gone and done
aduoutry, now shalt thou stande till
the bell be ronnen, and that the wa-
kers may take thee, & doe wyth thee
according to the law. The wife an-
swered, My Lord wherefore lay yee
that to me, for in very troth, the cause
of my being abroad was for no euil
but I was called by my Mothers
maiden, & seiched in the night, and
when I saw you sleepe so sweetely,
I durst not wake you, because that
ye are old, & therfore I toke the keyes
& went to my mother, the whiche is
sore sick, that I feare to morrow she
must be anointed or aneiled, notw-
standing, for y I should not you offed
or displease I haue hasted me againe

D.ii.

to

The seven wyse

to you, and haue lefte her lying in
great paine and mispymittie, therefore
I pray you for the loue of God, lette
me in afore the bell bee rung. The
knight answered, so shal ye not come
in, ye must there abyde vnto þ tyme
that the bel be rongen, and vntil that
the watchman come & take you. The
she said that should be to you & to me
and to all our friendes and kindred
a gre at shame & rebuke, therefore for
the reuerence of almighty God, lette
me come in, then said he, haue in thy
mynd euil and false wyfe how often
times thou haste forsaken my bed, &
done aduoutrie, it is muche better þ
thou suffer shame, & bewayle for thy
saines here in this world, then for to
suffer payne in hell, she sayde againe
to him, I pray you for the loue of him
that was crucified, and died vpon the
crosse, haue mercy vpon me, the knight
answered þ labourest all in vaine, for
þ shalt not come in, but þ shalt carry
the

the coming of the watchmen, as shee
 hearde that she sayde, my Lorde yet
 knowe well that by this doore stand-
 deth a well, if ye let mee not come in,
 I shall therein drowne my selfe, ra-
 ther then all my friendes shoulde be
 shamed for me, then said hee, woulde
 God that thou hadest bene drowned
 long afore, or thou camest in my bell,
 And as they thus spake together, the
 moone went downe, & was alwaies,
 the said she, if it will none other wise
 be, I shall drowne my selfe, blesse
 fore, as a true Christian woman, I
 will make my Testament, & saye
 I bequeath to God my soule, and
 my body to be buried in the Church
 of Saynte Peter, and of all other
 thinges and goodes that God hath
 sent me, I give vnto you to dispose
 for my soule after youre wysedome
 and discretion, and when shee had
 thus said, she went to the well, and
 there lying a great stone, with both

The seven wise

her armes, she lift it vp & saide, no wor
I drowne my selfe and cast the stone
down into the well, & wente againe
privily, & stode by the dore, the knight
hearing the noyse, cryde with a loude
voice, saying, alas, alas, my wyfe is
drowned, & hastily came downe and
ran to the well, and when she sawe
that the dore was open, anon she
entered and locked the gate, & wente
into the chamber, and lay and loo-
ked out of the window, the knyght
stode by the well, and cried & wept
bitterly and sayd, wo be to mee, I
have nowe losse my moste best belo-
ved wyfe, cursed bee the tyme that I
made fast the dore agaynst her, the
lady heard that and sayde : O pee
cursed old Grevsard why stande pee
there this tyme of the night, was not
my body to you sufficient, where-
fore go you thus every nighte out to
your harlottes and whores, and
leave my bed. As he heard the voyce
of

of his wyfe, he was right glad, and
 saide; blessed bee God that yet she is
 not drowned, but my good Ladye
 wherefore lay ye such things against
 me, I thought to haue chastised you
 and therefore I locked the Dore, but
 in no wise I intended your perill, ye
 knowe well what sorrowe I made for
 you when I heard you to haue fallen
 in the well, & therefore I came lightly
 to haue holpen you, thereupon shee
 saide, thou liest falsely, I neuer com-
 mitted such default as thou layest to
 mee, but it appeareth by a common
 proverbe; he that is guilty or culpable
 himselfe in a lyme, he iudgeth euerye
 man to be in the same, or else the fa-
 ther neuer sought his sonne in the D-
 nen except he had bene therein him-
 selfe, so in lyke case conceauest thou a
 false surmise of me, but one thing, I
 promise thee thou shalt abyde there,
 vntill the watchmen come, and the
 bell be rongen, that they may leade

The seuen vylle

thee before the iudges to abyde and
suffer the law, then said the knyghte,
wherefore say you such thinges to me,
for I am olde & impotent, & most vni-
uete to delight in such game, I haue
bene conuetsant in this citie, & neuer
was I defamed, and therefore lette
me in, & to me or to your selfe dond
shame, she sayd ye speake in vayne, it
is better ye forthinke your synnes
in this world, then in hell, I haue in
mynd what þ wise man sayth, a poore
man proude, a ricche man a lyer, an
old man a foole, God hateth, so be ye
a lyer and rich, what nede was it to
you for to flauder me, & could not be
content, whē as ye haue þ flower of
my youth at your pleasure, and yet
runnest to whores and harlots, and
therfore it is þ great grace of God þ
ye haue time and space to forthink it,
lest þ ye should perrishe & be damned
for more synnes, and for that suffer
your pennance patiently, the knyght
sayde

saide: O my best & welbeloued La-
dy, although it be so, yet is God mer-
cifull, & he asketh nothing of a sinner
but þ he amend his lyfe, & fogethynke
himselſe, and do penance for his syns.
Now let me come in, & I will make
amendes, she said which Deuill hath
made ye so good a preacher, but so
come yee not in, & as they thus spake
the bell ringed, then intreated he fre-
quently saying, now suffer me to come
in, that I be not shamed for ever, she
answered, þ ringing of the bell pre-
tendeth the health of your soule; take
it patiently at your penitence, and as
this was saide, came the watchmen,
about the city, and found the knight
standing in the strete, & saide to hym,
O good man, it is not good that yee
in this houre of the night stand here,
And as the hearde the voyce of the
watchmen, she saide, good fellows
benge mee on the olde cursed whore
hunter & ribaud, for ye know whose
Daughter I am, this cursed old man,

The feuen wyse

is wont euery night to leaue my bed,
and go to his whores and harlots; I
haue long forborne him, & would not
shew it, ne complain vpon him to my
friendes, for I trusted that he would
haue amended his misdeade, & it hel-
peth not, and therfore take him, and
punish him after the lawe; that all
such olde Doctors maye take Exam-
ple by him. Then the watchme take
him, and a night chastised him in pry-
son, & on the morowe they put him
on the pillery, now saide the maister,
to the Emperour, lord haue ye vnder-
stood what I haue sayd, & so he sayd
right well. Then sayd the Mayster,
if ye put to death your Sonne by the
iustificatio of your wyfe, it shal chace
to you, worse then to the knyghte.
The Emperoure sayde shee was the
worste woman that euer I hearde
of, that so falsely brought her husband
to shame and rebuke: I saye to you
Mayster that for the reason of this
example

maisters.

example my sonne shall this day not die, the Maister saide to him, if ye doe so, then Doe ye wisely. And that hereafter ye shall ioye, and I commend you to God, & thank you of your patient hearing, and for the sparing of your sonne, and so he departed.

The thyrde complaint of the
Empresse.

When the Empresse hard that the chylde was not deade, she wepte bitterly & entered into her priue chamber & tare her skin with her nayles, & with a loude voyce cryde & sayd alas that euer I was born, and that I so great a kings Daughter shold thus be intreated & shamed, & thereof can haue no remedy, her Gentlewomen this hearing, went & shewed it to the emperour, & he wente vnto her and comforted her saying, O Ladye wepe not so, ne crye not, for it becometh you not? who answered, the loue that I haue and owe vnto you, maketh

The Teneu wyse

maketh me more to sorrowe then the
contempt of the death, for why þ in
ward loue of your hart hath hither
to prohibited & letted me that I haue
not retourned againe into my coun-
trei to my father, but I feare if I
should so do, it mighte tourne you to
harne, for he is mighty to honoure
me with riches, & to be ge my quarell
& despight, in such wise þ ye & youres
might repent it. Thereto saide the
Emperour, let that passe out of your
mynde, neither repeate it any more.
for as long as I lue, I shall neuer
fayle you, And he sayd Lord, I pray
God þ ye may long lue, but I feare
me þ it shall happen vpon you, as it
did to a knight & his sonne þ woulde
not burye his fathers heade in the
churchyarde, & yet his father was
for him slain, then sayd the emperour
shew me the example, how it was þ
he would not bury his fathers head,
he said I shall do it to your profite.

The

Maysters.

The thyrde Example of the
Empresse.

There was in the Cittie of Roome
a knight that had ii. Daughters,
and one sonne, this knight had so
great delight in hunting, iusting and
turning, that all thing that he might
win and get, he layd it & spent there-
vpon. In that time liued the Empe-
rour named Octavian, which in ry-
ches of gold & siluer, exceded al other
kings & princes, in so much & hee had
a tower full of golde, an ordayned a
knight to haue the keeping & charge
thereof, this knight that so haunted
iusting & other ydle games, came to
so great pouerty, that hee was dis-
posed to sell his heritage, and called
to him his sonne, and sayd e: My son
it behoueth me of your counsayle for
necessity and pouertie compelleth me
to sell mine heritage, or else for to find
another way by & which I may liue
for if I should sel mine heritage, ye &
your

The seuen wyse

your sisters should perrishe. The son
said: father if ye can fynd any maner
of meane without selling of the He-
ritage, I should bee ready to helpe
you, the father said I am bethought
vppon a good counsaile. The Em-
perour hath a tower full of Golde by
night time let vs go thither with in-
struments, and dig & hewe through
the tower, & let vs take of the Golde
as much as shal suffice vs. Thereto
answerd the sonne & sayde þ coun-
saile cannot be amended, for it is bet-
ter of the Emperours Golde to take
to helpe vs, then to sell our heritage,
so they rose vp both in a nighte, and
went to the tower, and with instru-
mentes, they made a hole through
the wall, & tooke as muche Golde as
they both could carry awaye at that
time, the knyghte payd his debtes,
and haunted againe Iustes as hee
did before till all was spent, and
consumed. In the meane whyle, the
keeper

keeper of the treasure went into the
tower, and when he sawe the Treas-
ure stolen, and a greate hole made
through the wall, hee began to waxe
sore afeard, & wet to the Emperour,
& shewed how it was befallen. To
whome the Emperour said al angerly
what nedest thou to shew that, haue
I not deliuered to thee my treasure,
& therfore of thee I wil aske it, a-
non as the keeper herd þ, he wente to
the tower againe, & set afore the hole
a great vessell full of pitche, medled
with other gummies so subtelly that
no man mighte come in at that hole,
but that hee muste needes fall into
that vessell, and if hee therein fall
could no more come out of it. Not
long after the knight hadde all the
gold consumed, and spent, and went
againe with his sonne to the Tower
to steale more Golde. And as the fa-
ther went in fyrst, anone he was fal-
len in the vessell with Pitche to the
necke

The seven wyse

necke and when he saw that he was taken & could not get out, he sayde to his son follow me not, for if thou dost thou mayste not scape to bee taken, then the son sayd, God defend it that I should not helpe you, for if yee are found, we are all but dead, & if that ye may not be holpen by mee, I shall seeke counsaile how that ye may bee deliuered and holpen the father said there is none other counsell, but with thy sword smyte of my head, and as my body is found without a head, no man shall know mee, and so thou & my Daughters may so escape, and auoide this worldly shame & Death, the sonne sayd, Father ye haue giuen the best counsell. For if it were so that anye man mighte perceiue anye knowledg of you, none of vs should escape that Death, & therefore it is expediente that youre heade be smitten of, anone he drue out his sworde, & smote of his fathers head and caste it

it into a pit, and then wente and shew-
 ed to his Sister all the matter,
 which many dayes after, priuilye
 bewayled the death of their father.
 After this, the keeper of the treasure
 came into the tower, and founde a
 body without any head, wherewith he
 wondred sore, and shewd it to the
 Emperour, to whome he sayd, binde
 that body at the taile of an horse, and
 so drawe it by all the streetes of the
 cittie, & diligently take good heede, if
 ye heare any crye or weeping, where
 soeuer ye heare that, hee is Lorde of
 the house, take all them, and with the
 body drawe them to the Gallowes,
 and hang them. The whiche the
 Emperours seruantes fulfilled ac-
 cording to his commaundemente, &
 as they came against the house of the
 Dead knight, and as the Daughters
 sawe the body of their Dead father,
 they made a merueilous gret shriek
 and wept pitiouslye, and as their
 brother

The senen wyfe

brother heard that, anon he wounded himselfe greenously in the mouth with a knyfe, so that great plentye of blood came out of þe wound. The officers whē they heard the noise & cry entred into the house demanded the cause of their noyse & clamour, then answered the sonne, they lament because I am thus wounded, for whē my sisters sawe my blood so abundantly go out as ye see, they began to wepe & cry, & when the officers sawe the wound, they beleued his wordes also deceiued went their wayes, and hong the body of the knyghte vpon the gallowes, where he hong a long tyme, & his sonne would neither take his body down from the Gallowes, ne yet burie his head; the Empresse sayde, vnderstande yee what I haue saide: the Emperour said right well.

The declaration of the Example.

Then spake the Empress, thus my lord, I feare it chance of you & of your

Maysters.

your sonne; this knyghte for the loue
of his sonne was made poore, & fyrste
hee comitted thefte and brake the
tower, secundarily caused himself to
be headed, that his chyldren shoulde
haue no shame, after the sonne caste
his head in a dyke, and buried it not,
neither in church nor in churchyard,
his body he suffered to hang still by
on the gallows, if that he could not
haue taken it do wone in the daye, hee
might wol haue done it in the night.
In the same maner, ye labour night
& daye, & you may promote your son
to honour & riches, but without dout
he dayly labourereth for your confusi-
on, & destruction, that he may raigne
after you in your Emppre. There-
fore I aduise you that you cause him
to bee hanged before he destroy you,
the Emperour saide, yee haue shew-
wed mee a good Example. The
knyghtes sonne when hee had smit-
ten of his fathers head, woulde not
E.ii. burie

The senen wyfe

burie it, withoute doubt my Sonne
 shall not doe so by mee, but he anone
 commaunded his Officers that they
 should leade him to the gallowes, &
 they obeyed his commaundement
 hastily, and as they led him through
 the streete, the people made greate
 noyse and lamentation, crying, alas,
 alas, the only son of the Emperour
 is led againe toward the gallowes,
 & as they thus led him, the iii. May-
 ster named Craton came riding vp-
 on a horse, and as the chyld saw him
 he bowed downe his heade to him,
 as though he had sayde, haue mynde
 vpon me, the people cryed sayng,
 O good mayster hast thou, and saue
 your Disciple, he smot his horse with
 his spurres, & hasted him to the Pa-
 laice. And when hee came before the
 Emperour, he honorably saluted him,
 which said thy coming hither shall
 neuer auaille thee, for I think it long
 till I be reuenged of thee, the master
 said, I hoped in my coming to haue

mayster.

beue welcome, and haue had a better
reward, & not to haue bene rebuked
The mayster said, as ye haue deser-
ued, so shall it be to you. To whom
he said, my Lord, what haue I de-
serued. The Emperor said, ye righte
well deserued death, & I deliuered
you my sonne well speaking, & well
mannered, for to be infourmed and
taught, & ye haue deliuered him a-
gaine to me dum, and a ribaud. To
whom the mayster said, in þ you say
he is dumme þ I commit to God for
he maketh the dumme to speake, &
the deafe to heare, but in þ you say þ
he would haue inforced your wyfe,
that would I gladly know, if aue
creature haue that seene, for there is
no mallice aboue the mallice of a wo-
man, & that shall I proue by a good
example, that a woman is ful of lea-
singes and deceptions, and if yee put
to death your sonne for the woordes
of your wyfe, it shal happen to you,

E.iii.

as

The seven wyse

as it did to a noble man of his wyse
and of his pie, the which hee loued
marueilously. To whome the Em-
perour said, I pray you tell me howe
that women are full of mallice, and
teasinges, whiche saide, I will not
doe it, but if you first call again your
sonne from the death, and then at
at your pleasure I shall shew the ex-
ample. Then the Emperoure anon
made the Chylde to be called againe,
and put in prison, then the Emperour
he gan to saye this Example in this
fourthe following.

The Example of the thyrd
mayster.

There was in a Citie, a ritche
Burgess that had a pie, the
which he loued so much, & eue-
ry day he taught her to speake latten
and hebreue, also when she had lear-
ned perfectly to speake these two
languages, all that she saw & hearde
she hebbed and tolde to the maister,
this

maysters.

this good man, hadde a fayre yong
wyfe, as ye haue, the which he loued
much, but shee contrarie loued not
him, because he mighte not furnishe
her of suche pleasures and lustes, as
she desyred to haue, and therfore had
shee another fayre yonge man, that
she loued aboue her husbände, and
alwayes as her husbände was oute
of the towne about his Marchan-
dise and other busines, shee sente for
her best beloued, that they mighte to-
gether make good cheare, The wyfe
as shee that elpyed, tolde it to her
Mayster at his home comming, in
such wyse, that the wyse ran all o-
uer the rittie of her aduoutrie, wher-
fore her husband many tymes brab-
led & chid with her, shee answered
him, ye beleue yowe cursed pie, which
as longag she liueth, shall alwayes
make betwixt vs vari aunce and dis-
corde, and he said, the wyfe cannot
lye, for that shee seeth and heareth
E.iiii. that

The seven wyse

that she telleth me, and therefore I be
leene her more then you: it fortunied
p this good man went into far coun-
treis to do his marchandise, & as sone
as he was gone, his wyfe sent for his
friend and loue to solace and make
good cheare with him but he durste
not come by day light but aboode to
the evening, least that he should bee
sene & marked of þ people, when the
night was come, he knocked at the
gate, & she was ready and opened it,
and said go in free ly, for no manne
shall see you, & he saide, I feare mee þ
the curted wyf shall accuse vs, for by
her is com: great shunder vpon vs,
throughout all the citie, enter in the
said boldy & feare not & as she shuld
passe through the hall where the wyf
was in her cage, she hearde him saye
these wordes, O my most beloued, I
feare me greatly of the wyf, that she
shall bewraye vs. And as the wyfe
heard that, she sayd, be still foole it is
Darke

maysters.

darke she may not see you. Then the
pie that hearing, said, if I see thee not
yet I heare thy voyce, and thou doste
wrong to my maister, for thou flee-
pest with my mistresse and when my
maister commeth, I shall tell him.
The yong man hearing that, sayde,
told I not you that the Pie shoulde
discouer vs. And the wyfe said, feare
not, for this night we shall bee auen-
ged of the Pie, & entered into y^e cha-
ber, and slept together that night, a-
bout midnigh the wyfe arose, and
called to her mayden, and sayd fette
me a ladder, and set it vp to the roofof
the house, that I may wreake mee
vpon the Pie, the Mayde did so,
and they both went vp and made an
hole thorough the couering of the
house right ouer the pie, and there
through cast sande, claye, stones, and
water vpon the Pie, so muche
that the poore Pie was neare deade.
And on the morne, the yonge man
wente

The.ſeuen wyfe

went early out at a backe doze, and
when the good man was comming
home, as his custome was, he wente
and viſited his Pie, and ſayd to her,
O Pie my beloued byrd, ſay me how
thou haſt fared, the whyles that I
haue bene out, She ſaide, Maſter,
I ſhall tell you tidinges that I haue
heard, your wyfe as ſoone as yee
were gone, by the night tyme ſhee let
a mā come in, & as ſoone as I heard
that, I tolde him ꝑ I would ſhew it
to you at your comming home that,
notwithſtanding ſhe leade him into
your chamber, & ſlepte with him all
night, ye demaunded me alſo how ꝑ
I haue done in your abſence, & I ſay
to you of a troth, ꝑ I was neuer ſo
nere my death, as I was ꝑ ſame night
with ſnow, hayle, and raig, that fel
vpon my body, ſo long during that
I was almoſt leſte for deade. The
wyfe when ſhe heard that, ſayde to
her huſbande, Sir you beleene your
pie

maysters.

pie, now may ye here what she saith,
shee complayneth that in the same
night, there fell so muche snow, haile
and raine vpon her, that shee was
almost dead, & yet there was none of
them all that same night, for there
was not in a yeare a fayrer ne a clea-
rer night then it was, & therefore fro
henceforth beleue her not, then went
the good man to his neighboures, &
demanded of them if y^e nighte were
any tempest or raine, they answered,
that some of them had waked al the
night, and in all that yeare they had
not sene a fayrer night, then wente
he to his house, and said to his wyfe,
I haue found you in the troth, for
the night was fayre and cleare, as I
vnderstand of your neigbourres; ye
may now knowe of a troth, sayde
she the pie is a lyer, with her leasings
shee hath sone and made discorde
betwixt vs, and moreover I am dis-
famed through the tittie by her false
lea-

The seven wyfe

leasinges, then the Burgeis wente
to the pie, and saide, whetefore haste
thou made lies & false tales betwixt
me & my wyfe, is this the thank þ I
haue for the meat, that I was wont
to giue thee with my owne handes,
euerye daye, and haste also thereby
brought my wyfe into greate defa-
mation, through al the tolon, the Pie
answered, God knoweth þ I cannot
lie, for that I sawe & heard, that haue
I shewed to you, then sayd hee, thou
lyest, hast thou not said vnto me that
in that same night was hayle, and
snow and raigie that thou haddest
were had lost thy lyfe, whiche is false.
And therefore from henceforth thou
halt make no more leasinges ne dis-
royd betwixt me and my wyfe, and
toke the Pie, & brake her necke.
As the wyfe sawe that, she was glad,
& said, now haue ye done well, now we
may we all our life dayes liue in rest
and peace. And when hee had slayne
the

maysters.

the Queene, he looked vp and saw in the
toppe of the house a ladder, & a Vessel
with water, sand & stones, & as
he that beheld, he perceiued þ false-
head of his wife, and cried with a
loude voyce, wo be to mee, that for
my wyues words I haue slaine my
Queene, & also my solace and toy lost, the
which in all thinges said to me troth
And as he had thus done, anon for
sorrow he left his marchaundise and
all his house, and wente towards
the hollye lande, and neuer turned a-
gaine towards his wyfe. Then the
maister said to the Emperour, sir haue
ye vnderstode what I haue sayd, he
answerd right well, þ maister sayd,
was not that a false & curd wyfe, þ
so by her leasinges caused the Queene to
be slaine. The Emperour sayde, in
troth she was full of falsenesse, it pi-
rrieth me greatlye, to thinke of the
Queene, the whiche for her true say-
ing, lost her lyfe. Verilye I say vnto
you

The seven wyse

you that ye haue tolde me a fayre ex-
ample, therefore this day my Sonne
shall not die, then saide the Mayster,
Syr you doe wysely, and I thanke
you that yee haue spared your sonne
this day for my will, and to God I
commend you.

The fourth complaynt of the

Emptesse.

When the Emperes hearde that the
Chylde was not yet deade, shee
made great noyse & cryngs, in suche
wyse that shee was hearde through
the Wallaice, and sayde: woe bee to
me that euer I was made Emperesse
woulde God I had dyed, when
I was broughte into these parties,
when the Emperour heard the noy-
se and crye that shee made, he en-
tered into the chamber, and comfor-
ted hir as much as hee mighte, and
demanded the cause of her lamen-
tation which saide, O myne owne
Lorde haue no wonder, though
that

maysters.

that I be in this sorrow and agony,
for I am your wife and in your com-
pany by your sonne I am ashamed &
ye save me latelye all be bled & scrat-
ched and ye haue promised mee that
he therefore should be hanged, and
yet he liueth, wherefore shoulde I
not be sorry, the Emperour answered
he content & pleased, & I shall do
iustice vpon my son to morowe, but
in þ I forbare him yesterdaye, was
at þ moving of one of the Maysters
by an example, then said she, haue ye
forbidden to do iustice for one word,
were it so for all the worlde ye should
not let to doe iustice, & ye saye for the
example one mayster yee haue lefte
it. I feare me it shall happen to you
and with your maisters, as vppon
a time it fortuneth to an Emperoure
with his seven wise maysters. The
Emperoure sayde, I praye you tell
mee that Example. She sayde: to
what entente shoulde I labour in
vaine.

The seven wyse

haine, for yesterdaye I shewed you
a good example and it awayketh not,
for whatsomeuer I shewe for youre
honour & profite, that the Maisters
of your soure turne vp and downe,
to your destruction, as in this pre-
sent example I shall clearely shewe
you, to whome the emperour sayde.
O my best beloued Lady, tell mee þ
Example, that by the same I maye
the better beware, for though that
I respited my sonnes lyfe for one day
I shall not therefore giue him his
lyfe, for that is but differred is not
therefore anferred, & she sayd gladly
I shall shew it you, for your profite
and began to tell it as hereafter fol-
loweth.

The fourth Example of the
Empresse.

Sometyme was in the Cittie of
Rome seven wise maisters, by
whom al the empyre was go-
uerned and ruled, and the emperour
that

that then was; did not attempte no-
thing without the counsaile of the
Aristers; as they understood that
the Emperour was to be so in his
wed; that without them he should en-
daine or do nothing; in the meane
tyme they made by their artifice coun-
ning, & the Emperour should cleare-
ly see, as long as he was in his phre-
laire, but as soone as he was out of
his pallace, he was made blinde; in
that did they to the intent that they
might be more freely have the deal-
ling themselves of all things that ap-
pertained to the Emperour, by the
whiche they gate and won to their
great profite, & sake of goodes, and
after they had made & wrought the
experiment, they could neuer chaunge
it ne undo it afterwarde, but them-
selves shode still blind many yeares.
Then the .vii. matheos made and or-
dained throughout the Empyre that
if anye man had dreamed a dreame,

f.i.

he

The seven wyse

hee shoulde come vnto thei^r with a
 floret of gold or silver, & they shoulde
 expound & declare vnto them the in-
 terpretation of their dreames; wher-
 by, and by other vniuersall meannes, they
 obtained, much more substances and
 money of the people, then the Empe-
 rour did; for on a tyme when he sat
 at the table with the Emperour, he be-
 gan to sigh and sorrowe in himselfe,
 and when he perceived that he en-
 quired diligently of him the cause of
 his heavynesse, he tolde the Emperour
 said, shoulde not that some be heavy,
 & sorrowfull that I so long have bene
 blind, & cannot see out of my pallance,
 yett can he not finde no remedye
 to whom he tolde the Emperour, & tolde
 shoulde heare mye humble tale; and it shall
 never repent you if you do the after.
 In your tyme to have yee seuen wyse
 Maisters, by whome yee and all the
 Emperour is gouerned, if yee woulde be-
 hold and marke this in your mynde,

ye shall finde that they are the cause
of your blindnesse and diseale, and if
it be so, they are worthy to dye a
shamefull death, therefore take heede
to my counsaile and aduise, sende ye
for the, & shew vnto the your diseale,
& infirmitie, & threat them on paine
of their liues, that they should fynde
a remedy to make you hole of youre
sickness, & blindnesse. This coun-
sell pleased the Emperour welk, and
among sent for the masters, & when
that they were come the emperour &
none shewed vnto the his infirmitie,
& blindnes, & charged them vppon
paine of death, that they should finde
a remedy, & make him whole therof.
Then answered they, ye desyre of
vs a thing that is difficult, and hard
for vs to doe thus shortly, but gve
vs respite & dayes, & in the tenth day
mee shall gve you answer. The
Emperor was therewith well con-
tent & pleased, then the seven noyse

The seven wyse

maisters went to counsell how they might restore vnto him his sighte againe, & in no maner of wyse could they finde the meane howe to put away the blindness from p Emperour wherfore they were all right sorrowfull, and sayde among themselves, without we finde a remedye, we are but all dead men. So went they from thence throughout all the Empire, and sought if they could fynd any meane by or counsell theretofore. It happened then vppon a tyme going through a certie, and in the middle thereof, they found chyldren playing & after them came a man with a tal-ler or floren of golde, & said to them, good Maysters this nighte I haue dreamed a dreame, the interpretatio thereof I would faine know wherfore I praye you shewe mee what it signifyeth, and take this gold to you. That heard one of the chyldren that played among the other and sayd to him

Maysters,

him : give me the golde, and then I
shall expound thy dreame. The man
said, I dreamed this night, that in
the midst of the Orcharde was a
great spring of water, wherof came
many small springes, that all myne
Orcharde was full and ouer flowng
with water, the chylde sayde, take a
Spade and digge in the same place,
there as ye thoughte that the water
out sprang, and there shall ye fynde
an hoorde of Gold so greate, that yee
and all your Chyldren and Lyuage
shall be for ever riche, the man dyd
as the Chylde had shewed him, and
found the treasure, according to his
woordes. Then went the man to
the chylde, and offred him a pounce
waight of the Gold that hee hadde
found, for the interpretation of hys
dreame, and he would none receaue
but comitted him to the prayers of
the man. The seuen Maysters wher
they heard the chylde so wysely ex-

f.iii.

pound

The seven wise

pound the dreame they sayde to him,
good chylde what is yon dreame. He
answered & said, I am called Mar-
tine. Then saide the Maisters, we
see clearelye great wofulnes in you,
we shall shew unto you a great mate-
ter, and of that we shold gladly that
ye could find a remedy. The Chylde
sayde, shew me your matter, and
they sayd, the emperor of Rome, as
long as he is in his palace, hath
his sight cleare without anye impe-
diment, and as soone as he is gone
out of his palaice, he is so blind, that
he may not see, if yee can knowe deter-
mine the cause thereof, and find a re-
medye that he may bee eased, and
have his sighte againe, ye shall have
great rewardes and honours of the
Emperour, the chylde said, I knowe
the cause as well of his blindness as
the Remedye. They sayde to him,
come with vs to the Emperour, and
ye shall be rewarded so largely, that

ye shall be pleased. To whom the
childe saide, I am ready to go with
you. And when they came with the
Childe before the Emperoure, they
saide to him Lord, lo here is this childe
that we haue brought afore you, the
which shall fulfil your desyre, as tou-
ching the cause of your blindnesse, as
the recouering of your sighte. The
Emperour saide, good masters will
ye take it vpon you, and abide there-
by, & the childe shall perfourme this
attempt. They all sayd yea, for we be
expect in his voyledome. The empe-
rour turned himselfe towarde the
Childe and saide, will ye vnder take
to tell me the cause of my blindnesse,
and the remedy, the Childe answer-
ed and sayd, my Lorde the Empe-
rour, leade me into your bed Cham-
ber, and there I shall shew ye what
is to be done, and as he was there
in brought, he sayd to the seruantes,
take of the cloathes of the bed, and al

The seven wise

the apparrell, & ye shal see wonders.
 And as that was done, they sawe a
 well smoking, that had .viij. springes,
 or fouds, the which when the Em-
 perour saw, he meruailed greatlye.
 The chylde sayde, ye see this well, and
 without it be quenched, ye shall ne-
 uer haue your sight, thenperour sayde
 howe may that be. The Chylde sayd,
 hit by one way. Thenperour sayd,
 shew vs then the meane, and if it bee
 possible to me it shall be done, that I
 may recouer againe my sight, as wel
 without as within. To whom the
 chylde sayd, my Lorde the .viij. springes
 of this well, are these seven wise mai-
 sters, the which hitherto haue Tray-
 tersuly governed you, & your Em-
 pyre and haue made you blind as ye
 be without your pallaice, & they your
 subiectes by exhortacion, might pull &
 pshawe, yet not seeing it, but now
 they knowe not the reuledy, therefore
 heare ye now my counsell, and this
 well

maisters.

well shall be quenched and extincte,
strike of the fyrst maisters head, and
anone ye shal the fyrst spring quench
and so by order one after another, til
that they are all beheaded, & anon
all the springes with the well shal be
banished and gone away, & yee shall
haue againe your sight, as ye had be-
fore, and when this was done & full-
filled, the well with the seven springes
were banished. And as the Emperour
had his sight againe, hee made the
child a great Lord, & gaue him gret
aboundaunce of goods. And after
spake the Emperesse, my Lorde haue
ye this example well perceiued, that
I haue told you, and he saide yea, in
the best wyse, ye haue recited a good
and worthy example. Then sayde she
in the same wyse, your seven wyse
Maisters intende to doe with you,
with their false narratiōs that your
sonne may raigne ouer you, whiche
God forbid.

The

The seven wyse

The declaration of the Example

This well is your sonne, whereto
out floweth. vii. springes that sig-
nifieth the. vii. wise Maysters, the
which Somie ye may not destroye,
without the seven wise Maysters be
made feble and brought to naught &
donethis well, & is your son with al
his caualtiōs & voiles shal not scape
but let him be hanged fyrst, least & he
haue helpe of his maysters, and after
consequently the seven Maysters, &
so you shall gouerne and guyde your
Empire in rest and peace. The Em-
perour anone commaunded his ser-
uauntes to leade his sonne to & Gal-
lodes, which they were loth to doe.
So was there then a greater multi-
tude of people gathered with greate
noyse and bewayling, so that the
noyse came to the eares of the fourth
Mayster, named Malquidake, the
which leapt vpon his horse, and ha-
sted

sted him to the pallaice: So mette
with him his Disciple, and did reuer
ence to him, & commended him
to him, & when hee came before the
Emperour, and had done his obeys
saunces and reuerence, as appertay
ned. The Emperour answered, and
said. Little thanke haue ye olde cur
sed Caitife, for the teaching of my
Sonne, I deliuered you my Sonne
wel speaking, in all thing righte ver
tuous, and ye haue sent him a foor
dome, and a ribande, for he would
haue layne by force with my wyfe,
therefore all yee with him together,
shall be hanged, then saide the Ma
ster: my Lord, I haue not y deserved
of you. God knoweth why your son
speaketh not, in shorte tyme shall yee
perceiue other thinges, but the tyme
is not yet come, but in that yee saye
he would haue oppressed your wyfe,
y is not Gospell nor proued, neither
for our singuler person, yee shoulde
iudge

The seven wyfe.

iudge youe sonne to death. If no wor
for the words of your wyfey iudge
your sonne to dye; it will be woofe
to you, then to a certaine olde man
and his wyfe, and that I shall well
proue, to whom the Emperour sayd,
thinke ye to doe with me ye olde wo
ters, as sometime seven wyfe men
did to an Emperour, Therfo said the
maister, the offence and trespasse of
one, or yet of twenty may not sounde
to the rebuke and blame of all other;
for ouer all the worlde, there be both
good and euill. But one thing of
a troth I shall shewe you, that euill
shall come to you if ye this daye doe
your sonne to Death for the wordes
of your wyfe, & which I could shewe
by a notable example. Then sayd the
Emperour wil ye that recite for our
teaching, the maister said if yee will
call againe your sonne, & keepe him
till I haue made Declaration of the
example, (then what manner yet
shal

shall thinke best to doe with him do
it) I shall rehearse this example, be
els not, the emperour commaunded
that he should be called againe, and
he desired the mayster to say as here-
after followeth.

The Example of the fourth

Mayster.

There was an olde knyght, and a
right wyse man, that long liued
with a wyfe and chyldre.

His friendes came to him many
tymes and counailed and exhorted
him that he should take a wyfe.

The knyght thus counailed, and
stirred by his friendes so often tymes
at the laste he agreeed to them, and
they gaue him to wyfe the daugh-
ter of the pryncesse of Rhome, that
was rich and right fayre, whome
when he hadde seene, amonge hee was
made blinde and taken in her loue, &
beganne to loue her maruailously
well, & when they had bene a cer-
taine

The seven wyse

take place together, & had no chylde.
 Upon a time in a morning, it hap-
 pened that she went to the churche,
 where she mette with her Mother,
 and saluted her as it behooved, my
 deate Daughte, saide the Mother,
 howe pleasest you your marriage, &
 your hulbande, she said righte euill,
 for ye haue giuen to me an old lame
 man, to my discontentation in al re-
 spects. I would yee had the same
 thus buried me, for I had rather
 dye and eate with a wyue, then with
 him, and therefore I maye no lon-
 ger thus indure, but I must loue
 another, then sayd the mother, God
 forbid that my dere Daughter, how
 long time haue I bene with your fa-
 ther, & yet neuer hitherto I medled
 me with such foolishnes. The dau-
 ghter said, Mother it is no meruaile,
 for ye both in your youth, inecete toge-
 ther, & the one toke solace of the other
 & I may receiue of him no maner of
 corporall

accept all pleasure, for hee is tolde; &
 vpon the bed he lieth as still as a stone;
 or as a thing immovable. The mo-
 ther answered, if ye will loue anda-
 ther, tell me what he is, the Daugh-
 ter saide I will loue a prieste. And
 what the mother said it were better
 to you & les sin to loue a knight or a
 squier then a prieste. And the daughter
 saide: if I should loue a knighte or a
 gentle squier, in short time he would
 be weary of me, and after that hee
 would doe me shame. And so will
 not I marrye for he will holde a bedde
 by a woman more & comely as well as
 mine. Also spirituall men bee more
 true to their loues, then the seruile
 men. The mother said, heare my coun-
 sell and it shall be good for you. The
 folke are with a fell, tempt your hus-
 band first & if ye escape him without
 doing any harme or synning, then
 loue the prieste. The daughter sayde
 I may not so long abyde. The mo-
 ther

The seven wyfe

ther sayde, vppon my blessing abyde
till ye haue proued him, the Daugh-
ter sayde, vppon your blessing I will
abide so long, till I haue attempted
him. But fyrste tell mee howe that I
shall proue him, the mother sayde,
he hath in his Orchard a tree which
he loueth muche, cause it to be smi-
ten downe whyles hee is out at hun-
ting, & agaynst his comynge make
him there a fyre, and if hee forgyne
you, then may yee saue ye loue the
thief. Als she had heard of that coun-
sell of her mother, shee went to her
house. To whom her husband sayde
where haue ye bene so long, she an-
swered, I haue bene in the Church,
where I mette with my Mother,
and with her a little I haue talked,
and communed, and so bega proper-
ty for to dissemble. After nidday the
knighte rode out for to hunt, then
shee thinking vppon the counsell of
her Mother went to the Gardiner,
and

Maysters.

and said to him, cut down this young
tree newly planted, that I maye
make a fyre thereof to warme my
Lord withall at his conning from
hunting, for it is a gre at wynde and
righte sharpe colde, the Gardiner
saide. Madame that will I not do
for my Lord loueth better the Tree
then he doth al the other trees neuer-
theles I shall well helpe you to ga-
ther woodde ynough, for to make a
good fyre, but in any wise this I will
not hewe downe. She hearde that
then boldlye she tooke the Axe from
the Gardiner, and hewed down the
tree her selfe, and made the gardiner
with other to beare it home. At euery
when the Lord came fro hunting, he
was sore a colde. The Lady made
a great fyre, and wente & mette with
him, and set him on a stoole afore the
fyre to warme. And as hee a little
while had sitten, hee perceaued the
odour of the fire, and called to him

G.i.

the

The seven wyse

The gardiner & said, I feele by this o-
dour that my new plante burneth
in the fyre. The gardiner sayd, Lord
this is true my Ladye your wife hath
killed it downe. The knight sayde to
her, god forbid that my plant should
be cut downe by you, she answered,
anone and sayd, Lord I haue don it
knowing the wether cold, & you also
colde, & therefore I haue ordayned
this fyre for your confort. As the knight
that heard he looked angerlye bypon
her and sayd, Cursed woman how
wast thou so hardy to heroe downe
so gentle a yong Tree; the whiche
thou knowest well that I loued a-
bove all other trees, when he so sayd
she began to weepe, and excuse hir-
selfe and said, my Lord I haue done
it for your good profite, and yee take
it so greuouslye, and beganne to crye
wo wo be to me, anone as the knight
saw the weeping and teares of his
wife, and herd hir cause he was mo-
ued

ued with mercye, & saide to her cease
of your weeping, and beware how y
ye anger me any more, or trouble me
in any thing that I loue. The next
day early in the morning, shee wente
again to the churchward, and met
with her mother comming againste
her, & they saluted each other. Then
the Daughter sayde to her mother, ah
deare mother I will loue the priest,
for I haue attempted my Lord as ye
counsailed me, but all for nought, for
he and he forgave it, when he sawe
me a little weep, then said the Mo-
ther, though diide men one time for-
give, they double the payne an other
time, & therefore I counsell you, that
you yet once againe attempte him.
Then sayd the daughter, I may not
longer abyde. for I suffer so muche
payne for the loue of the priest, that
with my tongue I can not tel there-
fore yee shal pardon mee, I will no
more follo w or doe after your coun-

The seuen wyse

cell, then said the mother, for the loue
that the childe should haue vnto the
mother attempte him yet once, & for
your fathers blessing, and then if ye
go quite without any harme or bea-
ting, loue the Priest in the name of
God. Then answered the daughter
it is to me great payne so long tyme
to abide, neuertheles for the blessing
of my Father, I shall once attempte
him, but tell me howe I shall begin,
the mother said, I vnderstand, that
he hath a little hounde that he loueth
wel & kepeth his bed, cast the hound
with so great might before his face,
against the wall that it dye, and if
ye scape without a strype, or that hee
forgiue it lightly, in y^e name of God
then loue the Prieste. Then sayde
the Daughter, I shall in all thinges
doe after your counsell, for there is
no Daughter liuing to daye, that
would more gladly haue y^e blessing
of the father and the mother then I

And

maysters.

And so she bad her mother farewell,
and went to her house againe, & that
day with great importunitie & trou-
ble of heart, she brought to the night
and when the night was come, shee
commaunded the bed to be couered
with purple, & with cloth of Golde,
whiles þ knight sate by the fyre, and
when the bed was thus made ready
the little hound as hee was accusto-
med, lepte on the bed, and shee tooke
him by the hinder legges, and with a
wood & a malicious heart, she cast it
against the wall, that it lay stil dead,
when the good old knight saw that,
he was merueiloustye angry, & sayd,
with a loude voice to his wyfe, **O**
worst and moste cruell of all wicked
women, how couldst thou fynde in
thine heart to slea that little gentle
hound that I so muche loued, **Lord**
saide she, haue ye not seene howe the
hound with his feete comming oute
of the myze, hath berayed our bedde,
that

G.iii.

The feuen wyse

that is so preciously couered wyth
riche clothes, and the knyght sayd,
with much anger, knewe you not
I loued much better the little hound
then the bed, when shee hearde that,
anone she began pitiously to weepe
and sayd, wo be to me that I was
borne, for all thinges that I doe for
the beste, it is all tourned into the
worste. The knyght would not suf-
fer the weeping and lamenting of
his wife, but for that he loued her
so muche, he sayde to her, cease youre
weeping, for I forgine you it, all
together, and I counsaile you that
ye beware, how that ye displease me
from henceforth, and they went
together to bed, vpon the morrowe,
she rose vp early, & went to þ church,
where she founde her Mother, to
whom when she had done reuerence
as it behou'd, she sayd: mother now
will I loue the priest, for I haue at-
tempted my husbände the seconde
tyme

maysters.

tyne, and all thinges he suffered.
The mother sayd, O my Deare Daughter, there is no cruelty or falshood about the crueltye of old folkes, and therefore I counsaile you, that you yet once prooue him, to whome the daughter answered, mother yee labour in vayne, for if yee wiste what and how much pain that I suffer for y priests loue, ye should rather helpe me, if ye loued me, the mother sayde, here my daughter this one time, and I shall neuer let you more. Thinke howe yee haue sucked Milke of my brestes, and the great paine that I suffered for you at your byrth, by these paines my Deare daughter, I desyre & I charge you, that yee deny me not this good petitio, & I promise to god I shal no more let, nor hinder you of your intent, but rather helpe you thereto, then answered y daughter it is to mee a greate paine to abstayne mee, and forbear my selfe so long.

G.iiii.

from

The leuen wyfe

from the loue of the Priest; neuer-
theles for the great charges that ye
haue layde to me, and also for that ye
haue made a bove no more for to let
me, but to further me, tell mee howe
I shal attempt him, & I shal yet once
more giue aduenture, & mother sayd
I know well that on Sunday next
comming, hee intendeth to haue vs
all to dinner, and there shall be youre
father and I, and all our friendes,
with all the best of the cittie, & when
you are set in youre place, and all the
meates are brought and serued vpo
the table, faste on the keyes priuilye
that hangeth at your gyrdle, in the
table cloth, and then faime to haue
forgotten your knyfe, and saye these
wordes openly. See what a shorte
wit that I am of, I haue forgotten
my knife in my chamber, and ryse vp
hastely, and go, and the cloth wyth
all the meates ye shall cast downe, &
ouerthrow vpon the grounde, and if
ye

maysters.

ye escape without paine, I make a
bowe to God, that I shall neuer let
you after. The daughter sayd, y^e shal
I gladly do, and so tooke her leaue &
departed, the feast day came, y^e all as
the mother sayd were biden, the ser-
uants made redye, & couered the ta-
ble, all were set at y^e table, & the dau-
ghter sate ouer againste her Lord, &
when y^e table was wel serued with
meates & other thinges therto belon-
ging, y^e Lady of the house sayd wth an
high voyce, see how forgetfull I am,
I haue left my knife in my Chaun-
ber, the which I must fetch, & rose
hastily vp, & drew the cloth with all
the meate y^e was vpon it, with hir, &
all the gold vessels and salts lay vpo
the ground, the Knighte wared sore
angrye in harte, but for shame hee
dissembled afore his gests, and com-
maunded an other cleane cloth, and
other meats to be brought, and with
ioy and mirth hee saluted his gests
to

The seven wyse

to cate & make good cheare, that by
him they were all made merry. The
feast or Dinner Done, they gaue all
thankes to the knight, and toke their
leauie and departed, euerye man to-
wards his own house vpon the next
day in the morning, the knight arose
earely and went to the churche, and
heard seruice, after which ended, hee
went to a barbour, & sayd vnto him,
sir are ye expert in blood letting, in
what vaine that I wil desyre you, he
said, sir I am expert in what Vayne
that yee can name in a mans bodye.
The knight sayd I am well content
come with me, & when he was come
to his house, he entred into his cham-
ber where his wife lay in bed, & sayd
to hir, rise vp shortly, then sayde shee,
what shall I do vp so earely, it is not
yet .ix. of the clock. The knight sayde,
yee must rise vp, for yee must bee
letten bloode on both your armes.
She sayd, I was neuer letten blood
and

maysters.

and shal I now bleede, then said the knight that is troth, and therefore ye are a foole, remember yee not that first ye hewed downe my tree, & an other tyme ye killed my little hound, and yester day ye shamed me afore al our friendes and parentes, and the fourth is, if I should suffer you thus, to go forth, yee shoulde for ever confound & shame me, the cause hereof I consider, & ye haue euill and wyld blood within your body, & therefore I will that the corrupt blood shalbe drawne out, that ye from henceforth shall no more put mee to shame & anger, & so caused to bee made a greete fire, & she stode & cried, & held by her handes towarde heauen, and sayd. My Lord forgiue me this trespassse, and haue pittie vpon me at this tyme and I shall neuer more offende you. The knight sayd, pray for no mercy, for & mercy that god hath wroughte towards thee at this present, is this, that

The seven wyfe

That except thou holdest out thy arme
straight, I shal soone haue thine hart
blood, & he saide also to the Barber,
smyte hard, and make a deepe hole,
in her arme, or else I shall giue you a
great stripe, then smote the Barbour
so sore, & the blood came aboundantly
out, & the knyght woulde not suffer
him to staunche it, vnto the time that
she chāged colour in her visage. And
as this was done, hee bad it to bee
stopped, & willed the barber to smite
the bayne vpon the other arme, then
cried shee with a loude voyce, my
sweete husoande, haue compassyon
vpon me, for now I die. The knyght
answered my wife yee shoulde haue
before thought on this, or & you had
done to me these three euil torments,
or despites, then she held out her left
arme, & the barber smote therein an
hole, that the blood came oute righte
hugelye, and suffered her to bleede
vnto the time that the colour in her
visage

maysters.

visage changed, and that she swounded, then said the knight, now binde
þ arme, & staunche it, and sayd to hir
now go to bed, and studie & thinke
henceforth how ye may amend your
selfe, or else I shall draw the bloude
of your hart. And as this was done
he gaue the Barbour his rewarde
and hee wente againe to his owne
house, and the wyfe under the handis
of her maidens nigh dead, was lead
to her bed, and bad one of her hande
maidens go to her mother in all hast
& saye þ I Desyre her to come speake
with me afore I die, þ mother when
she heard that, she was glad of þ cor-
rectiõ of her Daughter & hastily came
to hir, the Daughter when she heard
her mother, said to her. O my moste
sweete mother, I am almoste dead,
for I haue bled so much blood, that
I beleuee I shall not scape the deth.
Then answered the Mother, sayde
I not to you, that olde menne are
righte

The. seuēn wyse

right cruell and fell, wil ye no to loue
the priest? She said, the Deuill maye
the priest confownde & shame, I will
neuer loue other but my husbād, the
sayd the Mayster to the Emperour,
Lord haue ye vnderstoode her, & he
answered right well, for amongst
all other that euer I haue hard, this
was the best example. Thres. cuill
deedes she did to her husband, and I
doubte not but if shee had done with
forneth, she shold haue shamed him for
euer. Then sayd the mayster, there-
fore I counsaile you that ye beware
of your wife, least it happen woful
to you, for why if ye do to death your
only Sonne for her wordes, yee
shall be deceiued in the ende, and for
euer ye shall repent it. The Empe-
rour said truly Mayster this daye
my sonne shall not dye. The maister
sayd: my lord I thanke you that yee
for myne example and my sake, this
day haue spared your sonne.

The

maysters.

The fiste complaynte of the
Empresse.

The Empresse hearing that the
chylde was not yet deade, forth-
with apparrailed her self, and caused
her wayne and cartes to be in a rea-
diness as though shee shoulde haue
gone home into her countrey to her
father for to haue complayned of the
greate shame that was doone vnto
hir, and could haue no remedy there-
of. The seruants seeing that, went
and shewd it to the Emperour, that
the Empresse was going into her
countrey, when he that perceiued, he
went to her saying, whether are yee
going.

I hoped that ye had loued mee so
much, that in all the world ye shoulde
haue sought no solace but with mee.
To that she sayd, that is true, & there-
fore I go from you, for I had lea-
uer heare of your death, then to see
you die, without doubt ye delyte so
much

The seuen wyse

much to heare these maisters, that it
shall happen vnto you, as it did to
Octavian, the Emperour, the which
was so couetous, that the noble men
of the Empire, buried him quick,
and filled his mouth with molten
gold. The emperour sayd, Dere wyse
Do not so, that another tyme y blame
to you or me might be layde. Then
sayd the Emperes, truely the blame
is yours, for haue ye not promised
me many things that your son should
die, and yet he liueth, & therefore from
henceforth I wil no more beleefe you.
Then said the Emperour it become
meth not a king euery cause lightly
to discus without aduise, and specy
ally vppon his sonne, on whome it is
not meete lightly to giue iudgement.
And therefore I say and praye you
y pee will tell me somewhat, by the
which I may gouerne my selfe, for
it is the vtter destruction of a king
without aduise, and vndiscreetely to
giue

giue iudgement, he answered and
saide, I will gladly tell you a nota-
ble Example, so that from hence forth
ye shall not be couetous or desyring
to heare the maisters, and began to
say in this forme.

The fourth Example of the
Empresse.

Octavianus the Emperoure reig-
ned in Rome right riche and co-
uetous, & aboue all thinges hee loued
Golde. The citisens y^e tyme of Rome
did much harme, & many great out-
rages to other nations, in so muche
that diuers nations and regiōs were
moued and stirred againste the Ro-
mains. In that time there was ma-
ster Virgilius, the which excelled in
magique, & in other sciences, al other
maisters, the citisens prayd him that
he by his arte and cunning, woulde
deuise some what, by the which they
of their euilnes mighte haue war-
ning and knowledge before.

H. I.

where

The seven wyse

whereby that they mighte prouyde
for theselues þ better. He then made
by his art and cunning a tower, and
about vppon the tower did cause to
be set as many Images, as in all the
world were regions and prouinces.
& in the midst of the tower he lette
to be made and set an image whiche
helde in his hande an appell, or a
great round ball of Golde. And e-
uery Image of the tower held in his
hand a little bell, & stode turning, &
loking towarde his owne prouince,
to him assigned, and as often times
as any prouince would stirre and re-
bell against the Romaines, so often
turned him the image of the Land,
and rang the bell, that hearing the
citizens of Rome armed themselves
& to that prouince hastened withall
their mighte the same to subdue,
and so was there no lande so greate
that could wreke them vppon the
Romaines and therefore were they
Dread

dread and feared ouer all the world.
 Also that Maister Virgill made for
 the solace and comfote of the poore
 people, a light that alway burned, &
 by that light, he made two Bathes
 the one of them hote, in the whiche
 the poore people mighte bathe and
 walsh them, and the other colde, in
 which they mighte themselues re-
 freshe, betwixt that light, and the
 bathes, he made an image standing,
 in whose forehead was written. He
 that smiteth me; shall anone haue
 vengeaunce. This Image stode
 there many yeares; at the last there
 came a clarke & beheld the Image, &
 red his writing, and thought in him-
 selfe, what vengeaunce hee mighte
 finde therefore, I beleue better that
 if any man shoulde smyte thee, that
 thou fallest therewith to the earth,
 he shoulde finde some treasure vnder
 thy feete, and therefore is thy wy-
 ting that no man shoulde haue it, and

The seven wyse

the clarke lifte vp his hande, & gaue
the image a great stroke, that it fell
on the grounde, and anon the lighte
was out, and the bathes were ban-
ished away, & hee founde no treasure.
The pore folke that perceiuing, were
all sorrowfull saying, cursed mought
he be for euermore, that for his singu-
ler conetousnesse hath destroyed this
image, & vs hath robbed of so greate
solace & comfort, hereafter assembled
three kings, the which of the Romanes
had bene oppressed, and suffered
great wrongs, and went to counsell
with them of their counsaile; howe
they might best of the Romanes bee
auenged, and some of them sayd, we
laboure in vayne; as long as there
standeth the tower with the images
we may nothing doe against them.
To the counsaile arose vp foure kni-
ghtes, & sayd to the kings, we haue
thought a good remedye; howe wee
shal destroy the tower with þe

ges, and that to do and bring about,
 we wil our liues set to pledge if that
 ye will do the cost. Then sayde the
 king, what cost shall we doe? They
 said we must haue fower tonnes of
 Golde. Then sayd the king, take
 the Golde, and fulfill your promyse,
 the knightes toke the Golde, & went
 towarde Rome, and when they
 were thither come, in the nighte with
 oute one of the gates in the Ditch
 with water, they drowned one of the
 tonnes with the Golde, and another
 ton they drowned by the second gate
 and the thyrde ton drowned by the
 thyrde gate, and the fourth ton by the
 fourth gate they drowned, and when
 they had thus done, early in the mor-
 ning they entred into the cittie, at an
 houre conueniēt, when the Emperoz
 went ouer the mart, they did to hym
 reuerence as it behoued. The empe-
 rour seing them, Demanded from
 whēce they were, or what science, or

The seuen vvise

what seruice they could doe , which
answered, wee are of farre Coun-
treis, and we be southsayers so perfit
that there was neuer thing so priue-
ly or secretly hid , but that we shal
finde it by our dreames. wee haue
heard that ye labour and haue plea-
sure in such thinges , and therefore
came we to you, to witte if ye had a-
ny neede of our seruice . The Em-
perour sayd, I shall proue you, & if it
be so that I fynde you true, yee shall
haue of me greate rewardes & than-
kes. They sayd, we aske nothing but
the halfe Deale of our rewarde, of the
gold that by vs shall be founden, the
Emperour sayd I am therewith wel
content, & thus had they with the em-
perour many wordes, at euen when
the emperour was going to bed, they
said vnto him, my lord if it please you
this night shall the oldest of vs , sette
his cunning a worke and dreame,
thyrd Day wee shall shewe you his
dreame

Maysters.

dreame and what it signified, the
 perour sayd, go in Gods name. And
 they went forth with great gladnesse
 & all þ night they passed ouer wyth
 derisions and myrth, vpon trust that
 they should come to a good purpose,
 when the thyrð Day, was come they
 went early to the emperour the fyrste
 of them sayd my lord pleasest you to
 go with vs without one of the gates
 of the cittie , and I shall shew you
 where as a tonne full of Gold is hid,
 the Emperour sayd, I shall go with
 you, and see if it be true that yee saye.
 When they were comen to the place
 they drewe out the tounne that they
 there afore had putte, the emperoure
 when he saw that was glad , and
 gaue to them their parte then sayde
 the seconde dreamer, my Lorde this
 night I shall dreame, the emperoure
 sayde, God giue you a good dreame,
 The next night came, and hec tooke
 out the other tonne , & gaue it to the

H.iiii.

Empe.

The seten vwise

Emperour and toke also his share, in
like wise did the thyrde, & the fourth,
Spill the which the Emperour was
full of all measure ioyous & glad, and
said, he had not sene afore such true &
expert Southsayers or Dreamers, as
they were; then sayde they altogether
at once, as it had bene oute of one
mouth. My Lord we haue oue after
another dreamed, the whiche as yee
haue sene, they be all true proued, but
now if it please you, that wee maye
dreame all together this nigght, wee
trust that to vs shalbe shewed where
we shall finde a great quantitie of
substaunce of gold and of riches, the
Emperour sayd, God giue to you a
good dreame, that to mee and to you
maye bee profitable. On the nexte
morrow, they came againe vnto the
emperour, & said to him with ioyous
and glad visages or countenaunces.
My Lorde we bring good and pro-
fitable tidings, for this night in oure
sleepes

maisters.

sleepes, such & so greate a treasure is
to vs shewed, the which if yee will
suffer it to be soughte, yee shall bee so
much enriched, that in this worlde
shall bee none like you, the Emperour
sayde, where shoulde wee fynde this
treasure, they saide vnder the founda-
tion of the tower that the images
stande on. The Emperour answered
God defend & I shoulde for loue
of gold destroy the tower with ima-
ges, where with we of our enemies
be defended and warred, they sayde
to him againe. My Lorde haue yee
found vs in our sayings otherwyse
then true and rightfull. The Empe-
rour sayde naye. O Lorde said they
we with our owne handes shall gaine
out the Golde, without hurting of
the tower or the images. And it is ex-
pedient that secretly in the nighte, by
vs it be done, for dread of resort, and
concourse of the people, least that yee
should run in the noyse & clamours
of

The seuen wyse

of them, & also that they shoulde not take that good Golde awaye from you and vs. The emperour sayde, go in the name of God, & do youre best, as ye well can, and I shall to morrow errely come to you. Then wente they with ioy & gladnes, & in y^e nighte they were letten into the tower, and with great haste and dilligence, they vndermined it, and in the next daye, early they mounted vpon their horses, and rode againe towarde their own country with ioy & glorie. And so y^e they came withoute the sighte of Rome, the tower fel down, on y^e morning insuing. When it was fallen & the Senatoures it perceiued, they sorrowed gretly, & there was great sorrow & bewayling throughout all the cittye, & they went to the emperoure, & said, Lord how may it be, that this tower is thus fallen, by the whiche we haue alwayshad warning aforesaid of our ennies, he answered & sayd

to

maisters.

to me came foure false Deceiuers, and
fained themselues to bee Southsay-
ers, and that they could find trea-
sure hid in the Grounde, and they
saide, that vnder the foundation of
the Tower, was hid an innumera-
ble sowe of Golde, the whiche they
should vndermyne withoute hurting
of the tower or images, & I gaue
faith to them, and they haue decey-
ued me. They answered him: yee
haue coueted so much Golde, and for
your insatiate couetousnesse we shall
be all destroyed, but fyrste your coue-
tousnesse shal fall vppon your selfe,
they toke and led him to the Capitall
and laid him on his back, & powred
his mouth full of molten golde, say-
ing to him, ye haue desyred gold, and
therefore ye shall drinke golde, & after
they buried him quicke. Not long
after that came the enemies against
the Romaines, and ouercame & de-
stroyed them all. Then said the Em-
peresse

The seneu wyse

pres vnto the Emperoz, haue yee my
lord this example well vnderstood:
and he sayd right well, then sayd she
the tower with the Images is your
bodye and fyne wittes, as long as
ye lyue, there is none so hardye to
trouble or make warre vppon you,
ne vpd your people. That hath your
Sonne right well vnderstand wyth
his seneu maisters, and wyth their
falle narrations of fable fynde howe
they may destroye you, for yee are o-
uer much conetouse, to heare and en-
cline to them, and in so muche & they
shall vndermyne you, and caste you
vnder foote, & bring you to naughte.
The Images are your fyne wittes,
that bee all losse. And for as muche
as you be so childish and foolish, they
shall destroy and slea you, and youre
son shall obtaine your Empyre. The
Emperoz said: ye haue recited to me
a good example, wherfore it shall not
to me happen, as it did with the To-
wer

Maysters.

wer; but my son fyrst this daye shall
be hanged; to whome the Emperesse
said, if ye do so, ye shall fare well and
liue long, vppon the next daye, hee
commaunded him to bee led to han-
ging, & as he was led towarde the
gallowes came riding againste him,
vppon a horse his fyft mayster, to-
warde the pallaice, and came before
the Emperour, and saluted him with
all reuerence, and hee dispised his sa-
lutation, and put him in feare of his
life. And the maister said. My Lord
I haue not deserued to dye, & for to
dispise my salutation, it is not your
honor, for your sonne hath not with-
out bene of such conditions, as ye re-
pute him, as yee in shorte tyme shall
find, that he speaketh not, is of his
great wisdom, & know ye y he shal
wel speake as y time cometh, though
that he now speake not, as yee in
shorte tyme shall heare, but ye say that
he would haue shamed your wyfe,
that

The seuen wyse

that beleue not, for so wyse a man, as he is, should neuer attempt so shamefull a deede, & if yee put him to death for your wyues wordes, yee shoulde not scape without shame & vengeaunce in likewyse as Ipocras scaped not wout vengeaunce, for the death of Gallienus his cosine, & emperour sayd, & would I faine heare and vnderstand then said & maister what shoulde auaile to tell you this Narration for your profite, if in the meane season your son should behāged, & therefore if ye will againe call your son, & thereafter do as you thing best, it shall bee at your pleasure. The Emperour bid call againe his sonne, and set him in prison, and then began the maister to tell on this manner that followeth.

The Example of the fyfte
maister.

Sometime there was a famous
phisitio named Ipocras right
cunning, the which excelled

all

Maysters.

all other in cunning and science, he
had with him his newewe or kind-
man that was called Galienus, the
which he loued much, this Galienus
was of an excellent witte, & applied
all his minde & witte to learne of his
uncle the science of Physicke. When
Ipocras perceiued that, in as much
as he coude, hee hid from him his
cunning, fering that he should excell
him in that crafte, for the great wit
that he was of. As Galienus sawe
this, hee studied and exercysed in so
much that in shorte tyme hee hadde
perfite cunning in physicke, for the
which Ipocras enuyed him muche,
It happened vppon a time thereaf-
ter, that the King of Hungarye sente
his messengers vnto Ipocras, that
he should come vnto him for to cure
his sonne. Ipocras excused himselfe
and would not go, but sent his Cou-
sine Galienus, with his letters of ex-
cuse for his not comming. And when
Galienus

The seuen wyle

Galienus was come afore the King, hee was righte worshipfully receaued, but they maruayled why that Apocras would not come, he excused him, saying that hee had manye great thinges to doe, that he mighte not come, but he hath sente mee in his steede, and with the helpe of God I shall make hole the Chylde, that pleaseth well the King. Galienus went to the chylde, and when he had seene his brine, and tasted his Pounces, he sayd to the Queene, O excellent Princes, I pray you heare & suffer my wordes, and tell mee who is the father of this chylde, shee sayde who should be y father but my lord the King: Galienus sayde, I am sure that he is not the father. Shee answered, if ye will say that for a troth, I shall cause your heade to be smitten of, hee answered, I saye once againe, that this King is not the father,

ther;

Maysters.

ther, and I am not therefore come
hither to leese my heade, for I haue
no such rewarde deserued, and hee
was going his waye. The Queene
spake, O good mayster Galienus, if
ye will keepe it secrete, and not disco-
uer me, I shall shewe and open vnto
you my hart, the mayster sayde, God
defend that from me, that I to anye
person should shew it, and therefore
O noble queene shew it boldly to me
for it shall neuer pas my mouth after
I shall your Sonne ease and make
him whole, she sayd, if ye doe that, ye
shall haue of me a good rewarde, and
therefore heare what I shall saye, of
fortune came hither vnto my Lorde,
the king of burgondine, & he was so
long with me cōuersant, & this childe
by him I bare, then said the mayster
fere ye not, I know well that it was
so before, & anone he gaue the chylde
to eate biese or of an Ore, and drinke
and the chylde was eased of his infir-

I.i.

mitie

The leuen wyle

initie, and when as the king hearde
that the chylde was quite of his ma-
lady, he gaue vnto y mayster a good
reward, but of the queene hee secret-
ly receaued a great gifte and a spe-
ciall thanke, and went his way and
when that he was come home, Ipo-
cras his mayster demaunded of him
saying, haue ye beheld the chylde, and
he said yz. The asked he him what he
gaue him, flesh or beefe to eate, & wa-
ter to drinke. Then sayd Ipoctras, y
mother of the chylde is not true to her
husband: that is troth, sayd Galie-
nus, ipocras anon was moued with
enuie & thought in himselfe, if heare
he not found a remedy, my Science
shall no more be set by, and hee shall
bee named and praised aboue mee,
And from that daye forwarde, he
thought and deuised how he mighte
lea him, vpon a daye, Ipoctras cal-
led & said, come go we to seeke & ga-
ther her bes in the garden: to whome
he

Maysters.

hee sayde Mayster I am ready, and
when they were come into the Gar-
den, Ipocras sayd, I feele that this
herb is right vertuous, stoupe down
& gather me of it. Galienus did so, as
they went about the garden, sayd I-
pocras, now I well perceave the O-
dour of this hearbe that it is better &
preciofer then gold, & therefore stoupe
downe to the ground and draw him
out with the rootes, for it is muche
worth. Galienus bowed himselfe
down to pluck vp the herb, Ipocras
drew out his knife & killed him. Af-
ter that Ipocras fell sicke to Death,
that the strengthes of his bodye fay-
led him; & did as much as he coulde
to helpe himselfe, but it woulde not
be, and as his scholers and disciples
heard of it, they went hastilye to him
and all that they might or coulde do,
for the profite of his health, they did,
but it auayleth him nothing.

When Ipocras this perceyued,

J.ii.

he

The senen wyse

he sayd vnto his scholers, go & fetch
me a great ton, and fill it full vnto
the bunkes with water, and when
they had so done, hee sayde to them
make now therein an hundred holes
and when that was done, there
went none of the water oute, then
sayde Jpocras, behold my most dere
disciples how that the vengeaunce
of God is fallen vpon me, as yee o-
penlye may see, for in this Tonne are
an hundred holes, & yet goeth there
out not one drop, right so there com-
meth no vertue out of the hearbes to
helpe me, and therfore what ye do to
mee helpeth not, for I muste dye,
but my deare children, if my nephew
Galienus were now on lyue, hee
should heale me, whom I haue slain,
that mee sore greeueth, and there-
fore the vengeaunce of God cometh
ouer me. And this sayde, hee turned
him to þ wall & gaue vp the Ghoste,
Then sayd the maisters to the Em-
perour

maysters.

perour: my lord vnderstand ye well
what I haue sayd. He answered yea
right well, what hurt had it bene to
him and Galienus had liued.

The maister answered, it had bene
right good, for Iporas at that time
had not died, & therefore by right wi-
se iudgement of God, his medicines
auayled him not, and therfore I she-
wed to you, & it shall happen worse
to you, if that ye put to death youre
sonne for the wordes of your wyfe,
whiche in time of necessitie shall as-
siste and succour you, and consider
ye not that ye haue after youre fyrste
wife, wedded this wife, that ye now
haue, and so ye may the thyrde and
fourth, and neuer shall yee haue of
any of them, such a sonne that shall
keepe and saue you from perrill, the
emperour sayd, truly he shal not die.
Then sayd the mayster, then Doe yee
wisely, and I commende you to god,
and I thanke you, that ye haue this

I.iii.

Day

The seuen wyse
pay for me spared your sonne, the
Emperour sayd, I marke this well,
that women are craftye and subtle.
Therefore I will not for you, but my
selfe saue him.

The sixte complaynte of the
Empresse.

When that the empyesse had know
ledge herof, shee thewed herselfe
such a wood & impatient body, y^e all
y^e saw her or heard her, wondred &
said to the Emperour, your wife shee
pineth her selfe, as though she would
dye. The Emperour that hearing,
went to her and sayd, wherefore bee
ye so impatient, shee answered say
ing. O Lorde how should I holde it
in, when I am the onely daughter of
a king, & your wyfe, & in your com
pany, I haue had a great despight, &
shame, & continually ye haue promys
sed me to punish, but ye performe it
not. The Emperour sayd, I wot not
what I shall do, ye labour from day

maysters.

to day, to haue my sonne slayne. And the maisters labour to saue his lyfe, and amonges all these I know well that he is my sonne, but whether, the trothe is, that I know not . Then saide she, this is the cause whereof I complaine, & ye beleue the maysters more then ye do me, therefore it shall happen to you, as it did to a kīg with his steward, then said the emperour, tell & example, peraduenture it may moue me the soner, to put my Sonne to death, she sayd gladly, but I pray you giue attendaunce what I shall saye, and began to tell, as hereafter insueth.

The sixte Example of the
Empresse.

There was a King right proude and merueilouslie defourmed in his visage, in such wyse, that women hated and abhorred him.

This King thought to destroy Rome and to sleigh the Romaynes, & to take

I.iiii.

and

The seuen wyse

and carry away the bodie of Peter
and Paule, who whyle hee was in
this mynde, called to him his Ste-
warde, that was right secreete wyth
him of his pryncie counsayle, & sayd to
him, Seeke me a fayre woman, that
this night may sleepe with mee. The
steward answered. My Lorde yee
know well your infyrmitie, and dis-
ease, and that no woman will doe ill
without a great somme of Money.
The king sayd, think ye that for mo-
ney I will want one: Haue I not
Gold and siluer ynough, though it
were a M. florens, I should it glad-
ly geue. The steward hearing that,
was anon smitten with couetes, &
went to his own wyfe, whiche was
right fayre & chaste, & of good kindred
& sayde to her. O my good wyfe, my
lord desireth & coueteth sore to sleepe
with a fayre and bewtious woman
and will not forbear it, though that
he shoulde aske of him a M. florens,
and

maysters.

and hath commanded me to prouide
him of one, and therefore I counsell
you, y^e yeto vs get this money, y^e wife
sayd, were it not so y^e the king were
so proude and foule of visage, yet
wold I not to y^e euill consent because
of the sin against God: the Steward
answered, I consent that yee shal do
it, and thereto I counsell and com-
maund you, & promise you withoute
that ye consent to me herem, ye shall
neuer haue good day with mee: shee
hearing that trembled, in so muche
that for dread shee consented to him.
The steward then went to the king
and sayde. Syr I haue founde a
fayre woman, and shee is commen
of a good house, which wil not lesse
haue, then a M. florens and in the
even shee shall come and earlye in the
morning shee must awaye, that shee
bee not seene of the people, the king
answered & sayd, I am well content
when the night was come, the Ste-
ward

The senen wyfe

ward led his wyfe to the kings bed,
æ made fast the doze æ went his way
earely in the morning, the stewartde
arose, and went to the king and said
My Lorde it shall be Daye within a
while, it is good that ye perfourme
your promise, and let the woman go,
the king saide, this woman pleaseyth
me so wel, that so soone she shall not
Depart from me, when he that heard
he Departed thence all sorry, bruneath
he taried anye while but came to the
king again, and said, my lord þ mor-
ning is come, therefore let the woman
go as I haue promised her, least that
she be shamed, the king sayd yet that
she not go from me, æ therfore go out
æ shut the doze againe. The stewartd
right sorrowfull departed and went
vp and do'wne with an heauye æ an
angry harte till that the fayre æ the
cleere Day appeared, and then he en-
tered again into the chāber, æ said my
lord it is clere Day, suffer that womā
to

maysters.

to departe, that she be not therewith
ashamed. The king answered, I say
to you for a troth, she shall not yet
depart, for her companye is to mee
right pleasaunte and acceptable, the
steward that hearing, could not lon-
ger forbere, he hold his owne coun-
sel, but said vnto the king O my good
& gracious Lord, I beseech you suf-
fer her to departe, for it is my owne
wife, the king hearing that, sayde to
him. Open the window, and when
it was open, the fayre and bright day
appered, he beheld the woman right
faire & goodly, and perceiued that it
was the wife of the steward, & sayde
to him. O thou most & worst ribaud,
or knaue, why haste thou for so little
mony, shamed and vndone thy good
and faire wyfe, & her hast deliuered
vnto me vniwittingly, Therfore hast
thee, and get thee out of the Realme,
& neuer more hereafter come in my
sight, for from henceforth, if euer I
may

The ſeuen wyfe

may ſee thee, thou ſhalt dye the moſte
ſhamefull and horribleſt Death, that
euer can be imagined, when the ſte-
ward heard that, he fled his waye, &
durſt not abyde, & was neuer ſo har-
dy any more to come into the realme
And the king kept that wyfe all his
life dayes in great worſhip, & gaue
to her plentye of all thinges, that to
her behoued and appertained. After
that the king cauſed to bee gathered
and aſſembled a great and a mighty
army, and purſſaunt men of warre, &
ſo went to Rome with greate might
and beſieged the Cittie on all ſydes
ſo long, till that the Romaynes
woulde haue deliuered him for to
haue departed & withdrawne him
ſelfe from thence, the bodyes of the
holye Apoſtles Peter, and Paule,
Then was there in the Cittie ſeuen
wyfe Maſters, as ye now haue, by ſ
councell of whome al the Cittie was
guided and gouerned. And the citti-
ſens

maysters.

senis came to them and sayde. what shall wez doe , it behoueth vs that we deliuer vnto your deadlye enemies, the bodie of the holy Apostles, or else the cittie, then answered the fyrste maister, I shall with my wisdom, & cunning, this day saue the cittie, & the bodie of the Apostles, and so oue after another promised to doe the same, & so euerye of them for one daye. In likewyse as the Maysters haue promised your sonne, with that the King began to assaulte the Cittie on all partes, then began the fyrste mayster to say, and to aledge so wisely for to haue peace, that the King y day left his assault, and withdrew himselfe a little from the City, and so did all the maisters. i. after another, vnto the last, to whome came the burgesles & sayd: O mayster ye shal vnderstande y the King hath made his othe sworne, y to morrowe with all his puillance and strength he will haue

The seuen wyse

haue & win the cittie, or else we must
all be in ieopardie to leese our lyues;
therefore in acquiting of youre pro-
mise defend and keepe vs from dan-
ger, like as all your fellowes afore
haue done, to that answered þe mai-
ster and said, be of good comfort and
feare not for to morrow I shall by
my cunning shew such a worke and
operation, that the king with all the
puissance & might shall flee and leaue
the Siege. The nexte daye the king
made and gaue greate assaulte to
the Cittie, then wente the Mayster
and clothed himselfe with marua-
lous Vesture, hauing therein the
feathers, or the tayles of Pecoockes,
and of other foules, diuers coul-
lours, and tooke .ii. bright swordes
in eache hand one, & went therewith
all & stood vpon the highest tower of
all the cittie, and began to moue and
tourne or shew himselfe about on all
partes toward the host, so that they
might

maysters.

might all beholde and see him, and he
helde in his mouth the two brighte
swoordes that maruailously shyned,
they without of the kinges host that
beholding sayd to him. O Lorde be-
hold vpon þ hiest of yonder towers,
a wonderfull thing or a figure, ye I
see it well that it is maruaylous, but
what it is I know not, they sayde it
is Iesus the God of christian folke, þ
is come out of heauen vs to slea, and
destroy with his two swoordes, if
we any longer abyde, the king hos-
ring that trembled for feare, & sayd,
what shall we doe, there is but one
way, and that is, that wee anone go
and departe from hence, least þ their
god auenge himselfe vpon vs. Then
began þ king with all his host to fly
not withstanding, there was no uede
but þ they of the maister were begi-
led and deceiued. And when the Ro-
manes þ saw, they hastily pursued
after all armed in good ordinaunce, &
the

The seuen wyse

the king with manye of his people
they killed and destroyed, and also in
that manner by great subtilty of the
mayster, was the mighty king with
his armye subdued, then sayde the
Empyres to the Emperour, Lorde ye
haue vnderstand what I haue sayde.
He sayde yea, well in the beste wyse.
She said, haue ye now harde what
I haue sayd to you at the beginning
of this narration, of the steward that
the king trusted so muche, which
for liker of good, shamed his owne
wyse, and he for that was driuen
banished out of the lande, in lyke
wyse your son for the desyre and ap-
petite that hee hath to the Empyre,
intendeth to confound and destroy
you, But while ye be in your mighte
and power, do with him as the king
did with his steward, if ye will not
put him to death, banishe him out
of your empyre that ye without fere
maye liue in safety of your lyfe. And
haue

haue ye not also heard how the King
 lay before the cittie of Rome, & howe
 he was by þ wise maisters deceiued,
 and scorned þ he with his folk, were
 killed and slaine, in the same wyse
 the seven maisters intend to do with
 you, and by their false wyles, & subtil
 ties to deceiue you, & in the end to
 sleie you, that your son may raigne.
 Thereupon answered the emperor &
 said that shall not so be, for my sonne
 to morrow shall die. Then he com-
 manded his seruantes þ they shoulde
 leade his son to hanging, and al the
 folke heard that, there was a greafe
 noise, and gathering of them and be-
 wayled the death of the onely son of
 the emperor, and as the. vi. Mayster
 heard that, he hasted him to the Em-
 perour, and saluted him honoura-
 bly, and he tooke it with thankesfully, &
 threatned him that hee shoulde dye
 with his sonne, for that he was
 with them made dumme, and a
 ribaunde

The leuenwyle

rihaude, the which was shewed to-
wards his wyfe, the mayster sayd, I
haue deserued no death with youre
son, but great a large gifts, for he is
not dum as ye shall heare within.iii.
dayes, if he may liue so long, and if
ye put him to death for the wordes
of your wyfe then shall I maruayle
of your wise dome, and without dout
it shall happen vnto you, as some-
time hapened to a knight, & so muche
allowe the sayinges of his wyfe, &
he was bound to an horse tayle, and
drawne throughout all the cittie, to
a gallowes, the emperour sayde, for
the loue of God shew me that exam-
ple, that I may the better beware of
that perrill, that will I not doe, sayd
the maister, without ye do call again
your son. Then the Emperoure com-
maunded to call his sonne, and the
maister began afore all the folke to
tell in this manner following.

The Example of the fyfte mayster.

There

Maysters.

There was an Emperour of Rome,
the whiche hadde three knightes,
whome he loued aboue all other.
And in the same Citie was an auncient knight that had wedded a faire young wyfe, as you doe the Emperesse, whiche aboue all other thinges hee loued, this Ladye coulde sing righte well and melodiously, and with such sweetenesse that manye drow to her house, & desired her company, it befell vpon a season, as she sate in her house, her visage tourned into the fireate, that she might see them that went by, & began sweetely to sing, that all folke delyted for to heare hir. By chaunce came y wayes a knight of the emperours Courte, and heard that voyce, and beholding hir intently, he was taken in her loue, and entred into hir house, & fell in communication with her of loue, and amongest all other talk, he demanded what he should geue her to sleepe by

B.ii.

her

The seven wyse

hir one night. She answered an hundred florens. The knight sayde, tell me when I shall come, & I will give you an hundred florens. Shee sayde when I haue conuenient tyme I shall send for you, the nexte day shee sang againe in the same place and it fortuned, the second knight of the Enperoure to come by that same waye, the whiche likewise was smitten in her loue, and also promised her an hundred florens. To whome also she promised to shew him a time provided. The thyrde daye was the thyrde knight in lyke wise caught in her loue, the whiche also promised an hundred florens, and she to giue him knowledge of the time. These three knyghtes haue so secretlye spoken with the Ladye, that none of them had knowledge of other. The Ladye that was malicious, and deceitfull came to her husbände, and sayde, Syr I haue a secreete matter to shew

Maysters.

shew you, wherem if yee followe my
 counsell; our necessity and pouerty
 ye may largely releue. The knyghte
 said tell it me, I shall holde it secrete
 and fulfill it to my power, she sayde,
 three knyghtes of the Emperoures
 court hat, bene with me one after a
 nother, in such wise that none know-
 eth of anothers counsell, & euery of the
 haue offred me a C. florens, mighte
 we three C. florens get, & no know-
 ledge thereof detected, shoulde it not
 be to vs a great helpe, and our pouer-
 ty be well relieved. The knyght sayd
 forsooth yes, & therefore whatsoeuer
 you counsaile me to doe, I shall fol-
 low it. Then sayde shee, I shall giue
 you this counsaile, when they come
 with the florens, ye shal stand behind
 the gate with your sworde drawne
 in your hand, and because that euery
 of the cometh alone, yee shall slea one
 after another and so we shal haue the
 iii. C florens of them without know-

The seven vyse

ledge of any other. The knight answered, O my best beloued wyfe, I feare mee that this euill cannot be hid, and we shoulde therefore shamefully suffer death, if that it were known. She sayd, I shall this work begin, and I shall make mercof a good ende, & feare it not, when the knights saw that she was so hardy, it caused him to be the more bolde, & she sent for the first knight, & he came to her anon without any tarryng, to the gate and knocked, & she asked if hee brought the C. florens, & he sayd yea I haue them heare already, then let she him in, and anon in the entring in her hus and kill'd him, and so he did the seconde, and the thyrde, and into an secrete chamber they dyed the bodies of them, when it was thus done, the knight sayde to his Lady: O deare wyfe if these bodies be found with vs: we shall dye the moste shamesfull death that can be imagined.

Maysters.

imagined, for it is not possible but
that these knightes shall be missed,
in the emperours courte, and greate
searche and inquisition shall bee for
them made through all this Citte,
where they are become, She sayd;
sir I haue this worke begon, & shall
make thereof a good ende, feare not
as I afore sayde. This Ladye had a
brother, the whiche had the gouer-
nance of the welth of the cittie, & on
the nightes watched in the streates
with his fellows, shee stode at her
gate and called her brother, & sayde,
O my best brother, I haue a secrete
matter, the which in confession I
shall shew you, and therefore come
a little within, & when that hee was
come in, the ladye receined him frind-
ly, and gaue him wine to drinke, and
sayde my welbeloued brother, this is
the cause that I haue called you for,
of your counsell I haue much neede.
The brother answered, say it bold;

k.iii.

lye

lyte to me, and whatsoeuer that I
 may doe to my power, that shall be
 at your desyre without letting. The
 said she, yester day came in a knyght
 in good friendship, but after ward
 he fell in such wordes and variaunce
 with my husbände that hee slew him
 and lyeth in my chamber. And myne
 own dere brother, we haue no man
 that we may trust but you, & if þ bo-
 dy were found by vs, we shoulde dy,
 & she made mentiō but of one, þ bro-
 ther said deliuer it me in a sacke, and
 I shal beare him to the sea, she heying
 that, was full glad therof, and deli-
 uered to him þ body of þ first knyght
 he toke it, and went withall a good
 pace, & cast him therein, and as this
 was don, he came again to his sister,
 & said, gine me now of the best wyne
 for ye are of him quit, & shee thanked
 him and went into her chamber, as
 though she had gone for wyne, & begā
 to cry with an high voice, the knyght
 that

that was cast into the Sea, is come
 againe. As her brother heard that he
 wondered sore & sayd, giue me him, I
 shall see if he shall arise agayn, & toke
 the body of the second knight, suppo-
 sing it had bene of the fyrste knyght
 and went to the sea, and with a gret
 stone he drowned him therein, that
 done, he went againe vnto his sisters
 house & said, now fill me a Cup with
 good wine, for I haue drowned him
 so deepe, that he shall neuer come a-
 gaine, she said thāked be god, & went
 again to her chamber, & fained her to
 fetch wyne, and cried with a greate
 voyce, alas woe be to me, he is risen a-
 gain and come out of the sea, and as
 her brother heard that, with a great
 maruaile said, what Deuill is this
 knight, & I haue cast into the water,
 & notwithstanding is come agayne,
 Deliuer me him & thyrd time, and I
 shall see if he shall come agayne, then
 gaue she him & thyrd knight, whiche
 he

he beleued had bene the fyrst knight,
 & went without the citty to a greates
 forest, & made a great fyre, & caste the
 knight therein, and when he was al-
 most bzent, the brother went thence
 a little distaunce to doe his nede, then
 came there a knight that would ride
 to the Citty, wherein the morning
 they should haue a tomy, and misting
 & it was colde wether and darke, &
 was not far from the citty, & when
 he had a sight of y^e fyre, he drey to ther-
 to and lighted from his horse, & war-
 nished him. The watchman came, and
 said to him what art thou, the knyght
 sayde, I am a gentle knyghte, then
 spake the watchman, & said, thou art
 no knight but a Deuill for first I cast
 thee into the water, the iiij. time wyth
 a great stone I drowned thee, & the
 iij. time I haue put thee in this fyre,
 supposing y^e thou haddest bene bzent
 and yet thou standest here, & then he
 tooke the knyght with his horse, and
 cast

cast them both into the fyre, & after
 he went againe to his sister, & tolde
 what had happened him, & said vnto
 her of the best wyne, for after
 I had brent him, I founde him a
 game by the fyre in a horse, & I haue
 cast them both in the fire, and by this
 his sister perceiued well that he had
 brent a knight of the tourney, which
 angrie brought him of the best wyne
 abundantly, & after he had well drin-
 ken, he went thence. Not long tyme
 after there fell a great debate & con-
 tention betwixt a knight & his wyfe
 in such wyse I he wrote her, which
 had indignation therof, and waxed
 angry & sayd, I praye might heare
 it. O wretched wile thou kill mee, as
 thou hast done the three knyghtes of
 the emperours, certain men I hearing
 laide handes vnto them, & brought the
 before the Emperoure, & the woman
 knowleged that her husband had slain
 three knyghtes of the emperours, & howe
 he

The seuen wyfe

he toke from them three. C. florens
and as it was thus in trothe founde
both were drawne at a Horse tayle,
& hanged vppon a Gallows. Then
sayd the Mayster to the Emperoure
haue you vnderstande what I haue
sayde. He answered right well, I
say for certaine, that wyfe was the
worst woman that mighte bee of all
women, for she moued & stirred him
to murther, and afterwarde discou-
ered him, & Maister saide it is wyth-
out doubt that it shall to you happen
wyse if yee put to death your sonne,
by the aduise of your wyfe. The empe-
rour said, my sonne shall not die this
day. The maister that hearing, gaue
thanks to the emperoure, and tooke
leauie, and went his way.

The seuenh complaint of the Emperesse.

WHEN the Emperesse heard that
the sonne of the emperour was
yet lyving, as a mad woman shee
ran

Maysters.

ran to the emperoure weeping & cry-
ing, saying, O vnhappy womā what
shall I do alas, for I must needs flea
my selfe that so am shamed, & no pu-
nishment there vpon don, themperoz
answared, go I defend you such thin-
ges to haue in mynde, but suffer a
while, and ye shall haue a good ende
in your cause. She answered, sit the
ende shall be euill, for of that shal fol-
low to you and to me great confusi-
on. The emperour said, leaue of such
talke, she sayd, Lorde it shall come to
you and youre sonne, as it happened
to a king and to his stewarde. The
Emperour said, I pray you tell me
that example: she sayd I will glad-
ly tell it, but I feare me that yee will
heare me no more, for the nexte daye
the seuenth Maister shall speake, &
saue your sonne from the death as
his fellowes haue done, the.ii. daye
after this, then your sonne shal speke
of whose wordes ye shall haue, and
take

The seuen wyse

take such ioy, & delectation that the
loue betwixt vs, shall be wholye for-
gotten and washed away. The empe-
rour sayd that is impossible to mee
for I shall neuer your loue forget.

Then sayd she, O my best beloued
lord please it you I shall tell you one
example, by the whiche ye shall be-
ware before, of many perils in time
comming, and specially of your cur-
sed son whiche intendeth to destroye
me by maisters, the emperour sayde,
tell on your example, & y^e emperes be-
gan to tell of this insuing.

The seuenth Example of the
Empresse.

There was sometime a King the
whiche loued his wyfe aboue all
thing, in so much that hee closed
her in a strong Castell, and bare
the keyes of the castell himselfe, the
lady was therefore right heauy, and
desolate. Now in far parties there
was a valyaunt knight, the whiche

Maylters.

in the night dreamed after this effect
for he thought that hee sawe one of
the fayrest Queenes that mighte bee
whose loue aboue all thinges hee de-
sired to obtaine, and that if he mighte
see her walking, he should clearelye
haue knowledg of her, by whome
toward him gret friendship & wor-
ship shold come. To þ queene þ same
night by vision of the sayd knight, it
was to her also shewed, and yet they
had of eche other neither knowledg
of name, neither of fame, when the
knight had thus dreamed and seene in
his sleepe he thought and determined
in his mind þ his foote shold not rest
vntil the tyme he had found that lady
that to him was shewed in his vi-
sion, and lept vpon his horse, & tooke
with him all that was necessary for
his iurny, & rode & laboured through
diuers regions and Landes so long
til at the last hee came vnto the same
land where that the queene was by
her

The seuen wyle

her husbände closed , or kepte in a
strong castell. And when this sayde
knight was come into the same cittie
and by a certayne season had there
in sojournd , it happened on a day
as this knight walked by the castell
& knew not the Queene was there
in, she sate in a wyndow to beholde
and see the people going by , and a
mong all other , she saw the sayde
knighte , & knewe that he was the
same man that she had dreined of, &
the knighte by chaunce lifte vp his
eyne, and perceiued the Lady sitting
in the window, anone his mynd she
wed him þ it was she of whome hee
hadde dreined, and hee begā to sing
a song of loue. And as she hard þ she
was anon taken with his loue , the
knight from thenceforth dayly went
& walked about þ castell beholding
it all ouer , if any manner wyle hee
might get to her to shew his mynde.
The lady perceiuing þ shee wrote a
let

letter and cast it downe to him. And
 whē he had sene ouer the letter, and
 vnderstode the will of the Lady, he
 began to haunt Justes & turnemen-
 tes, and so did many great & marue-
 lous acts, that the fame of him came
 to the king, and as the king hearde
 thereof, he sent after him, and said to
 him, Syr knight, I haue hearde
 much honour of you, if it will please
 you to abyde, and to dwell with vs
 we shall giue you large giftes, and
 rewardes: the knight answered. O
 right mighty Prince, I am your ser-
 uant, would god that I coulde do
 any seruice to please your magnify-
 cence, without takig of any reward,
 saue one thing afore ali other I des-
 syre. The king sayde, shewe it
 boldlye what thing that is. The
 knight sayd: My Lord sithen that
 it hath pleased you for to take mee
 for your seruaunt, and one of youre
 Counsayle, mee seemeth that were

The leuen wyle

expedient for both our solaces, that
I had place nigh to the wall of the
Castell that I might at all tymes be
the more ready at your calling, when
that ye haue nede. Then þ king sayd
I consent to you, make it as ye think
beste. Then wente the knyghte, and
hyred workemen & made a fayre lod-
ging by the walles of the Tower, &
when it was all ready. He made a
couenaut with a workeman for to
make out of his house a secreete waye
into the court, & when it was made,
ready after his intent, hee killed the
workeman, because hee shoulde not
discouer it, and went into the queene
and did to her reuerence accordyng,
& they talked of many thinges, þ at þ
end he desyred to slepe by her, which
she oftentimes denyed, but neuerthe-
lesse she consented to him. After that
the Quene thought, what shal I doe
if I should giue knowledg thereof
vnto my husband, hereof should come
two

two euils, the one is my shame, and that by a venture hee shoulde vtterly forsake mee, and driue me out of his land for ener, and the knight he shold slea, for from the death he could not escape, and therefore it is better that I be still and tel not, the knight after that as often times as it plesed him, went in to the Queene, and did his will with her, and she gaue him a King, the whiche the King had gyuen vnto her at their wedding, this knight in euery battayle & turnamēt had the victory, wherefore he was, & stood in great fauour with þ king in so much þ he made him his steward, & gouernor of all his region & Land. It happened vpon a day that þ king disposed himselfe for to goe on Hunting, & he commaunded his steward for to make him redy vpo þ morrow, for to go with him, whereto hee offered himself all readye. And on the morrow after, they entred into the
 L. ii. forrest,

The leuen wyfe

forest, and all this day they chased, & followed the wyld beasts, y they were so wery, y the king by a fountaine sate him down to rest, and the knight by the king, & fel on sleepe by him, hauing the ring vppon his finger, the which the king marked, and knewe. After that the knight perceiued that the king had scene the ring, fained himselfe sore sicke, and sayde, My Lord I feele my selfe sore sicke, that if I fynde not hastilye remedye therefore by the meanes of Physicke I am but a deade man; but therefore I praye you licence me to goe home, to whome he sayde, go my deare friend in Gods name, he anon gat on his horse, & hasted him to his house, and went to the Queene, and gaue her againe the ring, and tolde her how the king had marked it, and scene it on his fynger, and prayde hir if he made any questions of the ring, that she should shew it to him. This Done,

maysters.

done, he went downe agayne to hys
lodging, and anone after that, the
king came to the Queene, & she recei-
ued him right louingly, & after that
a little time was passed, the king said
my lady, shew me where the King is
þ I gaue to you, I desyre to see it, she
said, O my Lord to what intente at
this tyme desyre you to see it, the sayd
he, if ye shew it not to me incontinent
it shall repent you, she arose anone vp
& went to the chest, & brought þ ring
to the king, and when hee sawe the
ring, he was halfe ashamed, & sayd
vnto hir. O how like is the knightes
ring vnto this ring, whiche I sawe
vpō his finger, & I beleued þ it had
bene my ring, & therefore it was that
I asked it of you so hastilye. And of
this euill suspicion I yeelde my selfe
guilty against you my deare Ladye in
this behalfe, for the strength of the
tower deceiued me, for I thoughte
that no man mighte come therein,

L.iii.

but

The feuen wylfe

but I my selfe alone, she sayde, my
deare lord wonder not, for one king
is like another, and workemen make
seldome any worke, but that other
make the same, but God forgive it
you that ye haue me suspected, when
ye know the strength of the Tower,
and the keyes yee haue alwayes by
you, & will trust no man therewith,
After þ the knight ordained a greate
dinner, & said to the king, my lorde it
is so that my Lady and loue is come
out of my countrey, and I haue cau-
sed to be made a dinner, and gladly
I would pray you that at this tyme
ye will do me honour, and take such
meate as is in my house, the king
sayde, I shall gladly do to you that
worship & more. The knyghte was
thereof glad, and by his secreete waye
went to þ Quene & saide to her, my
Lady this doo, ye shall come to my
house by my priue waye, and cloth
you in riche clothing after the maner

of

maysters.

of my countrey, and ye shall sit at the
table with the king, as my souerayn
ladie, and make him good cheare, she
saide, as yee will, I shall all thinges
fulfill, and when the houre of meate
was come, & the king from the Cas-
tell, was comming towarde the
knightes house, in þ meane tyme the
queene entred by the secret way into
the knights lodging, & apareled her
after the manner of the Knightes
country, & when the king was en-
tered into the house, she saluted & re-
ceiued him reuerentlve, & when that
the king had beholden her, hee de-
maunded of the knight, what wo-
mā is this þ is so fayre, the knight
sayde, my Lorde it is my soueraigne
Lady, that nowe is come out of my
country after me, I haue taried long
in her seruice, then the knight sette the
king at the table as it behoued, and
made the Queene to sit by him, and
the king thoughte that it was hys

L.iii.

Queene

quene and sayd within himselfe, O
 howe like is this woman vnto my
 wife, so the strength of the tower de-
 ceived him, that he gaue more fayth
 and credence to the knights wordes
 then he did to his own eyes & quene
 began for to speake, and talke vnto
 the king, & to stir him for to eate, and
 drink, & to make good cheare, and as
 þ king hard her voice, & speake, then
 he sayd to himselfe. O blessed Lorde
 how like is this womā to my quene,
 in her behauing, in spech, in visage, &
 in all other thinges and conditions.
 & alway the strength of the Tower
 failed him. In the ende of the meate
 the knight prayed his loue to sing
 a song afore the king, the whiche be-
 gan to sing a song of loue. When
 he heard that, and knew her voyce
 he thought, is not this my wife, how
 may it be she, haue not I the keyes
 of the tower my selfe in keeping, and
 so all the meate time he sate & stroue
 within

maysters.

within himselfe, then at the laste hee
saide vnto the knight that he shoulde
take vp þ table, for he had somewhat
for to doe, for why he was in a great
thought, and sore troubled in mynd.
The knight answered and said, my
Lord ye make no good cheare, ye are
full of thoughtes. And if it please you
we shall make to you all the sporte, &
solace. And the woman sayde please
it you syr King, here by vs tarry, we
shall make to you all the sporte and
solace that we can, like as the queene
in her solace & comfort, he sayde take
away the table, for I may no longer
abide, then the knight at the com-
mandement of the King, toke vp the
table & thanked them al, & the king
went hastily vnto the Castell, sear-
ching whether the men were with
in or not. And in meane whyle the
quene went vp by her priuy way, &
put of her vppermost bestures, and
the king founde her in the same clo-
thing

The ſeuen wyfe

thing that he left her afore . When
as the king was entred, & found her
he imbraced and kissed her, and sayd
vnto hir . This daye haue I eaten
with my knyghte and with his loue
that is come out of his countrey, and
sithens I was borne to this daye
mine eyes haue not sene two so lyke
creatures in all thinges, as shee is to
you , & this meate tyme I haue bene
so much stirred with diuers things &
I could no longer abyde there, but &
I must come and search whether ye
were here or there, the sayd & queene
sir how might yee thinke that , for
ye know well that this towre is fast
and strong ynough , & that no bodye
can come in nor out, without you, for
ye alone haue alwayes the keye, how
were it then possible for mee to bee
there, ye finde sometime one mā lyke
another, and therefore ye should take
none Argumentes of misdeeming
or of suspicion, as yee late did of the
ring.

maysters.

ring. The king saide that is true, and
therefore I knowledg my selfe gil-
tie that I haue misdemed you. After
that came to him the knight & sayd,
My Lorde I haue of long tyme ser-
ued your good grace, and nowwe it is
time that I retorne againe into my
countrey, and therefore for all the
seruice that I haue done vnto you, I
desyre of you but one thing to doe for
me, that is, your noble grace will
doe me suche honor, as to giue vnto
me before the priest, with your owne
hande, my loue, whiche I intende to
wedde, in the face of the Church,
which hath followed me out of farre
countreys, and whome I shall bring
thither againe as my lawfull wyfe,
whiche thing shall bee vnto mee
greate honour and worship, when
I come into my countrey, the king
aunswered. That petition and more
if yee desyre it, shall I gladly doe
and fulfill. The knight pseyred
the

The seuen wyfe

the day of mariage, the which daye
this good king came to the Churche
worshipfully. The priest was read-
dy, and stood adorned with his ve-
stimentes for to solemnise the Ma-
trimonie. The knight had all readye
apparelled the Queene in his owne
house after his country maner, & had
ordained two knightes for to leade
hir to the Church, they beleving þ it
had bene his Paramour. And when
they were in the face of the Churche
the Priest sayde, who shall giue this
woman vnto this knyghte, then the
king sayde, I shall giue her to myne
owne knight, and tooke her by the
hande, and saide vnto her, O good
woman, ye are much lyke vnto my
Queene: and therefore I loue you
the better, and also for that yee bee
my knightes wyfe, and shall bee of
my house, & put the Queenes hande
into the knightes hande, and the
priest after the manner of the church
bound

bounde & wedded them together, & when all this was finished & donne, the knight sayde vnto the king, Syr my shippe that I intende to go in towarde my countrey, is alreadye to make sayle; wherefore I humbly beseech your moste noble grace, that it will please you for to accompanye my wife therevnto, & if ye will aduertise and informe her that she loue mee & haue me in fauour aboue all other creatures liuing, & if rather for your good exhortation and doctrine. Then the king with a great multitude of people went with them, and accompanied them vnto the ship, of whose departing to the ship, many of them were sorrowfull, the king beganne to say vnto the queene my most deare friende hearken now well vnto my counsell and follow it, for it shall bee for your profit, my knight hath now here wedded and done to you all the worshipping that in him is, wherefore
 looke

The seven wyse

loke that ye loue and honoure him a-
 boue all earthly creatures, as God
 hath commaunded, and that ye be to
 him true, & obedient, & as this was
 said, he deliuered hir vnto the knight
 saying, my blessing goe with you
 both, and our lord keepe and con-
 duct you in safety to your countrey.
 Then þ knight & the queene bowed
 and inclined downe their heades to
 the king, & thanked him of all things
 and they committed him to God, &
 entred into the shippe, and the mari-
 ners hoysed vp the sayles and sayled
 forth afore the winde, so that within
 a short tyme the king had lost þ sight
 of the ship, and from thence he went
 hastily to the castell, and missed the
 Queene, and when he found her not
 he was moued in all the parts of the
 body, and sought all about the tower
 and serched, till at the last he founde
 the hole or the secrete waye that the
 knight had made, & as he sawe that

he

maysters.

he weeping bitterly, cryed out & sayd
alas alas, this knyght in whome I
had so great confidēce & truth, hath
taken away my wife, was I not a
foole that I gaue more faith into his
wordes, then I did to myne owne
eyne. Then sayd the Emperesse, my
lorde haue yee vnderstoode what I
haue sayde, the Emperour sayd well
in the best wyse then sayde the Em-
peresse remēber how that hee trusted
the knyght and yet he deceiued him.
In the same maner wise, ye haue con-
fidence in the. vii. wyse maysters and
they labour for to destroye me, that
am your wyfe, & ye giue more fayth
vnto their wordes, then ye doe vnto
your owne eyne, for you haue well
sene how y^e your son rent & scratched
me. wherfore yet I bere & haue the
tokens and the marke as yee maye
see. And also ye know well howe y^e
your cursed sonne hath mee shamed
and ye marke not how they defende
him

The seven wyse

him in his folly & falshood, therefore
it is to be dreade that it shall happen
to you as it did to the king, that to
you I haue spoken of. The emperoure
sayd, I beleue myne even better then
their wordes, and therefore I saye
to you, & to morrow I shal do iustice
of him, & next day the Emperour com-
maunded that his son should be han-
ged, then began again a great noyse
and great bewayling amongst the
comon people, for & death of & empe-
rours only son, & at last the Mayster
heard & perceiued that, he ran to the
officers & which led him to the Gal-
lowes and sayd vnto them, my dere
friendes, I pray you make not ouer
great haste, for I thinke this daye
with the grace of God to deliuer, &
saue him from his perill, & fro thence
the maister hasted him towards the
emperours pallaite, and reuerenced
him according to his duety. But the
emperour with great malice and in-

Dig-

Maysters.

dignation answered to him. Neuer
more haue ye ioy ne health, for that
ye haue set my son thence vntaughte
and dunne, & which that I deliue-
red vnto you well speaking, therfore
shall ye all behanged with him, the
mayster answered, sye the tyme is
not long betwixt this & to morrowe
noone, & then by the grace of God ye
shall here him well and wysely spea-
king, and vnto you the troth saying
& that I promise you vppon paine of
my life (if yee will spare him so long)
if ye finde it not so. Then sayde the
Emperour, if I might heare my son
speake, it shall suffice mee, I woulde
desyre not longer to lyue. Then the
maister said, ye shall see and heare all
this, if ye will abyde this little tyme,
and then shall openly be knowne the
discention, and the stryfe that hath
bene betwixte vs and the Empresse,
and then shal it be ended, and if that
ye do not call againe your sonne, but

M.i.

put

The seven wyfe

putte him to Death for your wyues
wordes, it shall happen to you worse
then it did to a knyght that dyed for
a little blood that he sawe his wyfe
bleede, to whom after she was right
vynkinde. Then sayd the Emperour,
that example woulde I fayne heare.
Then said the maister let your sonne
be called againe, and I shall tell you
so notable an example, that during
your lyfe, ye may beware of the vni-
truth, & vniust fastnesse of women.
Then the emperour sayd, I shall go
call my sonne again vpon a conditi-
on, to morrow I shall heare my sonne
speake as ye haue promised mee, the
Maister said doe that my lord, for it
shall so be, and began to tell as here-
after followeth.

The Example of the seventh mayster.

There was a knyght that had a
fayre yong wyfe, whome hee
entirely loued, in so much that
he could not be out of her sight. It
hap

happened on a time that they played
 together at the ches & the knyghte by
 chance held a knyfe in his hand; and
 she playing, fortunied to smyte her
 hand vpon þ knife, þ a little blood be-
 gan to appeare. When the knyghte
 saw that his wyfe bled he sorrowed
 much & was sore afraide of his wyfe
 that he fell to the ground in a sound;
 his wyfe cast cold water vpon hys
 visage, that he came a litle againe to
 himselfe and saide, lightly call þ cu-
 rate with holy sacrament for I must
 die, for the blood that I haue seene
 come out of your finger, hath smit-
 ten the death to my hart. The priest
 came and houseled him. and anon
 after he dyed without any taryng,
 for whose death; there was made
 great sorow and bewaylinges; and
 specially of the wyfe, and after that
 Obsequies were finished and donne
 according: She went and laye vpon
 the Graue, and there made the

The seuenwyle

greatest sorrow of the world, & sayd
þ she should neuer depart frō thence
but as turtle Doue she would for the
loue of her husband there abyde, and
die, then went her friendes vnto her
and said, what auaieth this for hys
soule to liue and die heare, it is better
that ye go to your house, and giue
almes for the loue of God, & that shal
auaile your soule, then in this place
to abyde, to whome shee answered
be still, ye are euill counsellors, consy-
der not ye how I am from him sepe-
rated & departed by his death, for a
little blood that he sawe come oute of
my hande or finger, and therefore I
shall neuer from thence departe, hir
friendes hearing that, made a little
house or lodging nigh vnto the graue
and put therein all thinges that to
her was necessarye, and wente their
wayes, thinking þ within a whyle
she should be wery to be alone, and
so desolate from all company, & that
thereby

thereby she should desyre againe the
company of people, in the Citty was
there a lawe þæt when a trespasse or
offender against the lawe were han-
ged that þæt sherife al the night should
watch and kepe the body all armed,
and if it happen that the body of him
hanged were stollen away, the she-
rife should leese all his lande, and his
life at the kinges pleasure, it happe-
ned soone after, that the knyghte was
ded, a mā should be hanged for tres-
passe that he had done, so that the
sherife after the lawe of the lande, all
the night watched by the gallows;
that was not far from the Citty, and
the churchwarde was not far fro the
same, then began the sherife to be so
colde, that he wist not but to dye, for
colde, except that he might speedilye
warne him, it was so feruente cold,
& so strong a frost, and by chaunce he
beholding from thence aboute him,
spying the fyre in the churchwarde, &

The seven vwife

hasted him and came therto, & when
 he was come, he called and knocked
 at the little house. The woman spake
 & sayd, who is that, & at this hower
 knocketh at the house of this sorrow-
 full woman, I am the sherife that so
 much suffereth, & without anone yee
 let me in, I shall freele to death, shee
 said I feare me if & I let you come in
 ye should shew me such wordes that
 should cause me for to bee more hea-
 uier, and he said I promise vnto you
 that I shall saye no wordes to youre
 displeasure. Then let shee bittin, and
 when hee a while had sitten by the
 fire and was well warmed, he sayde
 to hir. O fayre woman with youre li-
 cence would I fayne speake but one
 worde vnto you; shee answered to
 him, sir say what it pleaseth you, he
 sayde: O Lady, ye be a fayre Gen-
 tlewoman, riche and yong, were it
 not better, and more conueniente, for
 you to dwell at home in your house,
 and

and to geue almes, then to destroye &
 consume your lyfe here wth weepinges
 & cryinges, she sayd syr knight, had
 I knowne this afore, ye had not
 come herein, for I saye to you as I
 haue sayd to other often tymes, yee
 know wel that my husbād loued me
 so well, that for a little blood that
 he sawe me bleede on one of my fin-
 gers he is dead, wherefore I shall
 heare die for the loue of him, as the
 knight hard this, he toke leaue, & wēt
 to þe gallows, & when he was there
 come, he saw þe theefe þe he lefte
 there hanging, was stolen & caried
 away, & began therfore to wax hea-
 uy & fell for sorrow, & sayd, w^{as} mee
 what shall I doe, for I haue lost my
 life & all my goodes, and hee going
 thus ful of sorrow & heauines, & wist
 not which way to turne him, or to
 goe, at the last he bethoughte him to
 go to that deuout, and desolate lady,
 & shew vnto her the heauines of hys

hart to wit if she coulde giue him a
 ny good counsell, and when hee was
 thither come, he called, and she asked
 the cause of his knocking, then sayde
 he. Madam I am the sherif I was
 right now with you, and I woulde
 faine shewe you the secretes of my
 hart, therefore I pray you for the loue
 of god open the dore, and he went in
 & sayd to her. O most vertuous lady
 I come to haue your counsell, & ad-
 uise, for yee knowe well the lawes of
 the lande are that whensoeuer anye
 man is hanged & stollen away of the
 gallowses, then the sherrife his lyfe &
 goodes be in the kinges hande. Now
 it happened in the tyme that I was
 here with you, and warned me, the
 thiefe is stollen away from the Gal-
 lowes, therefore I pray you for the loue
 of god giue me your aduise, what is
 best to doe, she answered, I haue
 compassion vpon you, for by the lawe
 ye haue lost life and good to the king.

maisters.

Do now after my counsell, & ye shall
neuer leese lyfe ne goods, he aunsw-
red, therefore I am to you greatlye
bound, hoping to haue good comforte
she sayde will ye then promise to take
me to your wyfe, the knyghte answ-
red, would God þ yee were in deede
so mynded, but I feare least ye wold
disdaine so muche to humble you to
me þ am so pore a knyghte, shee sayde
I giue you my will therto, & he gaue
hir againe his will, and consented to
be her knyght during his lyfe. Then
sayde she, ye know well, that suche a
day my Lorde was buried, whiche
for the loue of me dyed, take him out
of his Sepulcre, and go hang him
in steede of the theefe. The knyghte
aunswered Ladye, your counsaile is
good. Then went they togethir, and
opened the graue, & drew him oute.
The knyght sayd, how shall we now
doe, because ere the theefe was ta-
ken, two of his vpper teeth were
smitten

The seven wyle

smitten out, and I feare mee if that
were perceiued, I shoulde bee dead,
Shee saide to him, take a stone and
strike out.ii.of his teeth.The knighte
aunswered,madame that may I not
doe,for whyle he lyued, hee was my
welbeloued fellow,and it shoulde bee
to me a great rebuke,if I committed
to do so disloyall a deede vnto his bo-
dy,being dead,she aunswered, for
your loue I shall do it,& tooke a stone
and smote out.ii.of his teeth,& sayde,
to the sherife, take him & hang him
vpon the gallowes lyke to the theefe
the knight sayd,I feare me to doe it
for the theefe in taking of him, was
wounded in his head, and wanted
both his eares, and therefore if it
were searched and found otherwise,
it shoulde bee to my vtter vndoing.
Then said she,take out your sworde,
and make him a greafe wounde on
his heade,and cut of his eares. O
madame,God forbid that I do sote
the

maisters.

the deade bodye that I loued so well
in his lyfe. Then sayde shee, giue me
your sword, & I shall for the loue of
you do it, & take the sworde, & smote
a manly stroke vpon the dead mans
forehead, and cut of both his Eares,
and when she had thus done, shee
said. Now take & hāg him withoute
company, and then the knight aun-
swered, yet I feare to hang him, for
the theefe wanted both his Stones,
and if that were searched and found
without, al our labour were in vaine
then said she, I saw neuer so ferefull
a man, seing the matter so cleare and
sure, take a knife & cut of his stones,
and he answered, that I maye not
doe in no wise, and therefore I praye
you spare mee, for you know well
what a man is withoute his stones,
she sayde, for the loue of you, I shall
do it. And toke the knife in her hand
and cut of her husbandes stones, and
said to him: Now take this Churle,
this

The seven wyfe

this disfigured, and hang him by
without dreade. And went forth to
gether, & hang the body vpon þe Gal-
lowes, and so was the sherife deliue-
red of þe kings danger, then sayd the
Ladie, now yee bee quit of all youre
daungers, & deliuered from all sor-
rowes by my counsell, and therefore
I will that ye wed me in the face of
the Church, þe knight sayde, I haue
made a vow þe I shall neuer wed o-
ther as long as ye liue, which I will
hold, but afterward he sayde, O thou
moste shamefull & worste woman of
all women, who would take thee to
his wife, an honourable and a lo-
uing knyght was thy husbände,
which for a little blood that he sawe
of thy finger shed, dyed, nowe haste
thou smitten out .ii. of his teeth, thou
haste cut of his eares and his stones,
& thou haste made him a great wound
in his head, what diuell would wed
thee, & because of þe, thou shalt neuer
shame

Maysters.

shame more good man. I shal rfd the
 & drew his sword & with one stroke
 he smote of her head, the maister said
 my lord haue yee vnderstoode what
 I haue sayd, the Emperour sayde,
 righte well. Amongest all women
 this was the worst & the knight re-
 warded her according, so p she shuld
 no more men shame, & the emperoure
 sayd moreouer. O my good maister
 might I once heare my sonne speake
 I should giue no charge of my lyfe.
 Then sayd the maister, to morrowe
 yee shall heare him speake afore you
 and hee shall shewe the trouth of all
 the variaunce betwixt vs & the Em-
 presse as I hope, and toke his leaue
 of the emperour and departed.

Howe that Dioclesian the Emperoures
 sonne complayned on the Empres
 & how that he excused him
 of her complaint.

And

AN after that all the maysters
 assembled together, & tooke their
 counsell howe, and in what manner
 they shoulde bring the chylde oute of
 prison, and led him to the pallaice, &
 so they went to the chylde there as he
 lay in prison, afore the middaye his
 will and counsaile to heare. To
 whome the child saide, what ye will
 y shall please me, but in no wise bu-
 sie you not howe y I shall aunswere
 or what I shall say, for with ioye I
 shall aunswere all things that shalbe
 demaunded of me. When the seven
 maisters heard that, they were right
 glad and clothed him in Purple, &
 in cloth of Golde, & two Maysters
 went before him, & one on bys righte
 hande, another on his left hande, &
 the other three followed after him, &
 before them all went. xiii. men with
 instrumentes of musicke, & brought
 him with great melodye and honour
 to the Pallaice, & when the Empe-
 rour

Mayllers.

but hearde all this melodye, hee de-
maunded what it was, then it was
tolde him by the standers by, saying:
sir Emperoz it is your son the whiche
commeth before you, & before al your
Lordes, to speake & excuse himselfe
of al things þ̄ are layd to his charge.
The Emperoz said, þ̄ is good tidinges,
if I mighte heare my Sonne speake.
And when the chylde was come to
the pallaite, hee rode to his father, &
said vnto him, hayle my Deare & most
honorable ffather. And when the em-
peroz hard the voyce of his sonne, hee
was so glad, that for ioy he fel down
to þ̄ earth, but þ̄ chylde toke him light-
ly vp agayne, & when hee was come
to himselfe, then began the soune for
to shew his matter, and there came
so great a multitude of people, & the
ioy & noyse of them was so great that
the child could not be herd. The em-
perour considering that, let Honey
to bee caste vppon the streates, that
the

the people therewith shoulde be occupied, and auoided oute of the Pallace, that they might the better here the chylde speake, but the folke tooke no regarde after the Money. The Emperour perceiuing that, made to be commaunded silence, vpon payne of their liues, & when they were all still, þe childe began to say: O my most deare father, afore that I anye thing saye, I beseech and pray you, that thempres with all her chamber maidens may come and be presente, and themperoz commaunded the emperesse with al her chamber maids to come without delaye, shee being in greate feare, came wth all her maidens, & the childe comaunded them to stand before al the people in a row, þe they might se them, then said þe childe to þe Emperoz sir lift vp your eyne & behold the chamber maide þe there standeth in greene clothing, the which ye know the emperesse aboue all other louth beste, whome

maysters.

whome commaund ye to be vncloa-
thed vnto her naked bodye afore vs
all, to see what shee is, the emperoure
said, my deare son it should shame vs
all, a woman to stand naked afore vs,
he sayde, if it be a woman, it is my
shame, and if not, let the shame abide
in her. when she was vncloathed,
they said all it was a man, and so it
appeared in the nether parts, where-
at they wondred greatly.

The declaration of the complaint of the
Emperours son on the Empresse.

Then sayde the sonne vnto the fa-
ther beholde this Ri-
baude that
many a night hath with your wyfe
lyen in youre chamber in aduoutye,
and haue defiled your bed, and ther-
fore the Empresse loued him so well,
the which ye knew not.

when the Emperour saw that, he
was impacient & wroth, so that hee
commaunded that she with the Ri-
baude should be brent, the son sayde,

R.i.

Lozde

My father make no hast of þy iudge-
 ment before I haue reprovèd her of
 that crime þe she layde vpon me false-
 ly, & that I haue declared howe shee
 vnruly, & falsely hath complained, &
 layed vpon me, then sayd the father
 my dere son I commit all the iudge-
 ment into your handes. The sonne
 answered if she be founde false & a lyer
 the law shall iudge hir. But my dere
 father, when ye sent after me at the
 iustace of hir, the I with my maisters
 beheld the starres in the firmament,
 & there we saw þe if I should speake
 any wordes within seven dayes, I
 should haue dyed a shamefull death;
 & therefore þe was þe cause þe I spake
 not. And whereas the Empress sayd
 and put vnto me that I would haue
 oppressed & rauished her, in that shee
 lieth falsely. But shee did her beste
 to haue caused mee to doe it. And
 when she in no wyse could bring mee
 thereto, she toke me paper, pen, and
 ynke,

ynke, & bad me write the cause that
 I refused her, and when that I had
 written that I would not do or com-
 mit such great & abhominable sinne,
 and woulde not my fathers or charde
 defoyle, then began she to teare her
 clothes, and scratch her visage, that
 it ran of blood, & cryed with a loude
 voice, & layde vnto me the cryme and
 blame. And when the mperoz hearde
 this, he behelde her with a fell coun-
 tinaunce, & said to hir in this maner,
 O thou wretched woman, was it
 not sufficiente to fulfill thy foule and
 lecherous appetite, thou and thy ry-
 baud, but wouldest also haue had my
 son. Then fell she empressse to the Em-
 perors feete, & she cried him mercey,
 then the mperoz said, O thou cursed &
 most vnhappy woman, thou askest
 forgiuenes, & thou art worthy none
 to haue, for thou hast deserued to dye,
 in three manner of wyse. The fyrste
 is, that thou hast done aduoutrie the

The leuen wyle

seconde is, that thou haste prouoked
and stirred my sonne to sinne, and
haste to him imputed and layde the
crime falsely and vntruely. And the
thyrde that thou haste euery day en-
ticed & prouoked me, with thy false
tales for to put him to death, & ther-
fore þe law shall haue the course vp-
on thee, & iudge thee to death, then
saide the sonne, father ye know well
that for the leasing that she lyed vpo
me, I was dayly ledde to hanging,
but God with the helpe of my May-
sters, hath deliuered me. O my most
honourable father, it was sayd vnto
you by the mypsters that I woulde also
by the helpe of my maysters, depole
you out of the Empyre, and that I
laboured to destroy you, and for to
set me in your place, shoulde not yee
then haue sorrowed, ye haue the Em-
pyre to gouerne, and wherefore
shoulde I not helpe you, my deare
father? For of you I haue my ly-
uing

Maysters.

ning, and I shal hold and repute you
for my soueraine lord and father du-
ring the terme of my lyfe, & I will not
in any manner depriue you of youre
honour, but I shall labour and busy
my selfe aboute the gouernaunce of
the same, & al your commaundements
I shall fulfill in euery thing, but it
is in lyke wise as the father caste his
sonne into the sea for to drowne him,
because he sayd, that he in tyme com-
ming should be his Lorde, & yet the
sonne by the helpe of God was saued
and was made greater Lorde then
he was, & yet was it no hinderaunce
to the father but profite also ye shold
see & remember that my lyfe & gouer-
nance shal neuer hinder you, but it
shall be to your great solace and ioy.
Then said the Emperour, blessed bee
almighty God, & the houre that I e-
uer begat you, and deserved to haue
such a son & I finde so wise and good
in all thinges. Tell me now an Ex-

A.iii.

ample

The seuen wyse

ample, by the which I may perfectely vnderstande thy wisdom, & that mine hart may the better ioy in thee. Then said the son, first commaund silence to your people & I bee not letted in my wordes, till that I haue done. And when that is ended, giue sentence with rightousnesse, of the law vpon me, and vpon the emperesse. Then commaunded the Emperoure silence, and the chylde began to tell in maner as hereafter followeth.

¶ The Example of Dioclesian, the Emperours son.

There was a knyghte whiche had but one sonne that he loued righte derely in the beginning, as ye now alone haue loued mee, whome hee deliuered to a mayster of farre countreis to nourish & to learne, the chylde waxed wise, & profited muche, and grew as well in learning, as in body & whē he had dwelled with his master .vii. yere, his father desired to see him

him; and sent letters to him, that hee
 should come againe into his country
 and visite his friendes, in likewise as
 ye haue sent for me. The chylde was
 obedient to his father, & came at hys
 commaundement, of whose coming,
 he ioyed much; for that he was as
 well growne in his members, as in
 doctrine. To euery man he appeared
 pleasaunt and gentle. It happened
 vppon a day, that the father and the
 mother sitting at the table, and the
 chylde seruing them; a Nightingale
 came flying afore the window, wher
 as they sat, & began to sing so sweete-
 ly that they maruelled, & the knyghte
 saide, How sweetely this byrde sin-
 geth; well were he & I could vnder-
 stand his song, & could shew & inter-
 pretation thereof. Then the son sayd,
 my worshipfull father; the song of
 the Nightingale I could well declare,
 but I feare your displeasure. The
 father sayde, saye hardly my sonne.

The seven wyse

the interpretation of the byrd, & then
ye shall proue whether I shal be an-
grie or not, but I shal marke wel the
reason of mine anger, and when the
son hard þ, he sayd: the Nightingale
had said in his song, that I shall bee
come a great Lord that shalbe hono-
red and worshipped of all men, and
namely of my father, the which shall
bring water for to walhe my han-
des, and my mother shall holde the
to well. The father sayde, thou shalte
neuer see the daye such seruice of vs
to haue, nor none such Dignitee shall
folow thee, and in great mallice and
woodnes he tooke his son vppon his
shoulder, and ran to the sea, and cast
him in, and sayd, he there the inter-
preter of the byrdes song. The chylde
could swimme, & swymmed to a lãde
where he was foure dayes without
meate or drinke. The fiftē day, there
came a ship sayling, & as þ child sawe
that, he called aloude to the shipntan
and

maysters.

and said, for the loue of God Deliuere
me fro the perrill of Death, & shipmen
saue that it was a fayre yong man,
they had compassion on him, & went
with their bote, and set him aboord,
& into far countreys with them they
led him, and sold him there to a duke.
This chylde grew goodly and fayre,
& the duke loued him muche, & had
him greatly in his fauour. Vppon a
time, the king of that realme let call
an assemble of all the great Lords, &
noble men of his lande to a generall
counsell. This Duke prepared and
ordained him to go to the counsell, &
marked the wisdom and wit of
the chylde, & tooke the chylde with him.
And when they were all gathered &
assembled before the king in his coun-
sell. My welbeloued lords & friends,
sayde the king, will yee wit the cause
wherefore that I haue called you to
this counsaile, then said they all, wee
be all Soueraigne lord at your com-
mand.

The seuen wyse

maundement. Then the King sayde,
it is a secret matter that I shall shew
you, if that any man can open it, and
declare what it signifieth, I swore a
promise vnto him by my crown, that
I will giue to him mine only dangh-
ter in marriage, and he shall be my fel-
lowe in my Reahue during my lyfe,
and after my death he shall haue and
possesse all the whole kingdome, and
the mystery of the counsell is this. iii.
Rauens alway follow me, whereso-
euer that I go, they leue me not but
cry with such horrible voices, that it is
great paine for me to heare them, &
to behold their lookinges; & therefore
if there be any man the whiche kno-
weth the cause of their following, &
can shew what they meane by their
crying, and bryde them from mee,
without doubt I shall fulfill this
promise that I haue made. And as
the King had thus sayde: there was
none founde in all the counsaile that
vnder-

understood the cause, or could moue
 or put away the Ravens. Then said
 the chyld to the Duke. My Lord
 thinke yee that the king will holde
 his promise if I accomplishe his will
 and desyre. Then the Duke sayde, I
 thinke he will performe that he hath
 promised, but will ye that I giue the
 king knowledg of you what yee can
 doe. Then the chyld sayd, I will my
 life set in pledge, & I shall perseuere
 and make it good that I haue sayde
 when the Duke heard that, he went
 to the king and sayde, My Lord the
 king: heare is a yong man that is
 right cunning and wise; the which
 promised for to satysfye; and fulfill
 in all thinges your desyre; as tou-
 ching the Ravens; if ye will fulfill
 that ye haue promised. The king
 swoore by the Crowne of his king-
 dome, what I haue promised, in
 all thinges shall be fulfilled. Then
 brought hee the Chyld before the
 king

The seuen wyse

king, and when the king sawe him,
he spake to him, O fayre chylde, can
ye gylle aunswere to my question, the
Chylde sayd, yea my Lord in the best
wise, your question wherefore that
the Ravens followe you, & horrible
call vpon you, I answered thereto vpon
a tyme it happened þ two Ravens
a male & a female had brought forth
betweene them the thyrde Raven, &
in þ said place was so greate famyne
& scarcety of all manner of thinges,
that men, beastes, and foules dyed, &
perished for default. The thyrde Ra-
uen þ time being yong in the Nest,
the mother left it, seeking where shee
might best get hit living, and came
no more to the nest. The male rauen
being þ, with great penury & labour
fed the yong rauen till that hee was
able to flie, and when the deare tyde
was passed & gone, then the Female
Rauen came againe to the yong Ra-
uen & would hold fellowshippe and
com,

mayllers.

company with him. And as the male
rauen saw that, he would haue dri-
uen her away, saying thus that shee
in his greate mischiefe and necessitie
lefte him and his companie: there-
fore now we shoulde want his com-
pany & fellowship. She alledged
and sayde, that she had in hys byrth
great labour and sorrowe, and suffe-
rd penury, and therefore of his com-
pany she should rather ioye then the
father. For this my soueraign Lord
they folow you asking y^e right iudge-
ment which of them both shall haue
the yong Rauen in their company, &
this is the cause of their horrible cla-
mour & noise that they make daylye
vppon you. But my Lorde had ye
herebpon a right wise Sentence ge-
uen, ye should neuer more see them or
be troubled with their crying. Then
sayd the king, for because y^e the God-
ther hath left and forsaken the yong
Rauen in his mooste necessitie, it stan-
delh

The seven wyse

deeth with reaso & iustice, & shee shall
want & be without his fellowship, &
where she saith and aledgeth that
in the bearing & byrth of him she had
gerat paine & trauell, & helpeth her
not, for & paine was turned into ioy,
as sone as she saw & yong Rauen in &
world, but for & the male is the cause
of production & generation in euerye
beast, & also because the yong Rauen
in his necessity, sustained & fed into
the recovering & nourishing of his bo-
dy by the male, therefore I giue for a
iudgement, & for a sentence of dismi-
tue, & the yong Rauen shall abide &
hold company with the father, & not
with the mother. And when the Ra-
uens herd this sentence, with a great
noise & erie they flue vp into the ayre,
& were no more seene or founde in all
& region. When & this was done, the
king demanded of & yong man what
his name was. Hee answered, I am
called Alexander. The said the king

I

maysters.

I will haue one thing of you, that ye
from henceforth shall name and take
me and none other for youre father,
for you shall marry my daughter, &
ye shall be possessor of all my realme.
The yong Alexander abode & dwel-
led still there with the king & euerye
mā had to him fauour & loue, for hee
began to haunt & occupy himselfe in
iustes and tourneys, where in at all
time he had the price aboue all other
that were in all Egypt, so þ his peere
or like was not found, & there was
not so hard, nor so obscure a question
put vnto him, but that he coulde as-
soyle it. At that time was there an
Emperour named Titus, that excel-
led in gentlenesse, curtesy, and curio-
sity of al other Emperours kings and
princes in the world in so much, that
such fame & noue flew & came ouer
the world of it, that what soeuer he
was that woulde profite in cunying
maner or behauiour, that hee shoulde
go

go to the emperours court. And when Alexander heard that, he sayde to the King. My most honourable father & lord, ye wote wel þ the world is full of fame of the emperour, þ it is delectable to abide and dwell in his court, wherefore if it please you my Lord, and father, I would gladly go to his court þ I might bee wiser & prompter, in manners and behaupour, then I am. Thereupon answered the King it pleaseth me right well, but I woulde that yee take with you plenty of Gold & siluer & other necessities so much, þ ye mine honor there may saue, and that ye may haue also that is to you requisite & necessarye. And also me seemeth it were expedient, that afore your departing you should marry my daughter.

Then answered Alexander, will it please you my lord, to spare mee at this time, and at my comming home againe I shall wed hir with all honour

nour as to her appertayneth. The
 King answered, sithen it is youre
 will to go to the Emperours Court
 I licence you, and thereto I consent.
 Alexander tooke leaue of the King,
 and toke with him of treasure abun-
 dance, and then he wente to the Em-
 perours court, & when he was come
 with a fayre cōpanye, he wente afore
 the Emperour, & fell on his knees, &
 saluted him, and did him reuerence.
 The Emperour rose bype from his
 seate imperiall, & kissed him, & asked
 of him of whence, & what he was, &
 wherefore he was come. he answered
 & said, I am son and heire to the
 King of Egypt, & am come to do ser-
 uice to youre moste highe Maestye,
 if it please you to accept mee. The
 Emperour sayd that he was righte
 welcome, and committed him to hys
 steward and made him his Caruer.
 The stewarde ordained him a fayre
 chamber, & puruaied him all things,
 D.i. that

The seuen wyse

that were necessary to the same, and Alexander behaued him so well, and wisely, & in shorte time of all people he was welbeloued, not long after that came the kings son of Fraunce, to doe seruice to the imperoure, and to learne nutter, whome the imperoure receiued honorablie, & demaunded his name & of what kindred hee was come, he answered, I am son to the king of fraunce, I haue to name Lodowike your seruant. Then saide the Emperour, I haue made Alexander my caruer, and ye shall be my Cuppe bearer, that alwayes ye shall doe seruice afore me at my table, & commaunded his steward to assign him a lodging, whom he assigned with Alexander in his chamber. These were so like in stature, in visage, & in conditions, that vnneth the one mighte be discerned from the other, but Alexander was more in cunning, lighter in his deedes, then Lodowike was

was, for Lodowike was a feminine
man and shamesfaste, and these two
yong men loued wel together. The
Emperoure hadde a daughter onely
named Florentine, the whiche was
right faire and gracious, and should
be his heire whome hee loued intyre-
ly, which had a court by her selfe, and
seruauntes to her assigned, to whom
the Emperour euery day was accus-
tomed to send fro his table of his dain-
ties in tokening of lone, by the hande
of Alexander, wherby the daughter
began to haue him merueilously in
hir fauour, because of his wisdom
and gracious behaniour, it happened
vpon a day Alexander at meate time
had such busines that hee serued not
at the table nor none other gaue at-
tendace for him in his roome. Lodo-
wike perceiued that, & serued in hys
steede, & when he had serued the em-
perour in his last seruice vnder his knee, the
emperour commaunded him to beate

The seuen wyfe

Dishe to his Daughter, as he was
wont to do, thiking him to be Alexan-
der, then toke Lodowike the Dishe, &
went to the palaice of the emperors,
Daughter, & saluted hir with greete
reuerence, & set þ meate afore her, but
to þ time he had not seene her, she per-
ceiued anone that he was not Alex-
ander & saide to him in this manner,
what is your name, & whose Sonne
are ye? he answered to her and said
Madame I am þ Kings son of frai-
re, & my name is Lodowike, she sayd
I thak you of your labour, & he toke
his leaue and departed, in the meane
time came Alexander to the table, &
they fulfilled their seruice. The Din-
ner done, anone Lodowike wente to
his bed sore sick, and Alexander per-
ceauing that, went to his Chamber,
and sayde to him. O my beste belo-
ued friend & fellow Lodowike, howe
is it with you, and what is the cause
of your infirmite. He answered

him

him & said; & cause of it I knowe not
 but fele me so sicke, that I feare mee
 I cannot escape the death, Alexander
 said, the cause of your infyrmie and
 disease, I knowe well, for to day whe
 as ye bare the meate vnto the emper
 ors daughter ye behelde her visage
 & beauty so feruently, that your harte
 is taken and rauished with her loue.
 Theredpon he answered, O Alexan
 der, all the Physicians in the worlde
 could not more truely iudge my sicke
 nes, than I feele it shall be my death,
 Thereto Alexander, be of good co
 fort, I will helpe you vnto myne
 boe, and went vnto the market and
 boughte with his owne money a fayre
 clothe set with precious stones, and
 knowinge to Lodowike, and pre
 sented it in his behalfe vnto the mayden
 as she sawe that, she asked him to whome
 he had that costly & precious Clothe:
 and he sayd, O mayden it is the same
 of the moste Christian King, that

sendeth it vnto you, for your loue,
 for he but for one sighte that hee hath
 had of you, is so sick that he lyeth vpon
 his bed vnto the death, and there-
 fore if ye suffer him to perill, ye shall
 neuer recover againe your honour.
 Then saide shee, O Alexander,
 would ye thus couinsayle me, that I
 should so leese my virginitee? God
 defende that, it be ye sure Alexander
 that of such messages ye shall neuer
 shole win thankes of me: therefore
 geue ye out of my sight, and speake no
 more of this to me: when Alexander
 hearde that, hee did cherefullye and
 departed. The next daye Alexander
 went againe to the Citie, he boughte a
 chaplet of manye times more
 than the cloth, and therewith hee
 went to the maids chamber, he gaue
 it to her of the behalfe of his lordship.
 And when she sawe that cost her gift,
 she saide vnto him in this manner,
 I am asleepe of you that so often times

as yee haue seene and spoken with
me, & yee haue not done your owne
errand in speaking for your selfe, but
for an other. Then answered he, O
madame, I haue not bene so dispo-
sed, because my byrth is not to bee
compared with yours, & also it hap-
pened me neuer such a case, that my
hart was so wounded, and hee that
hath a good fellow, is bounde for to
do him good and true felowship, and
therefore most excellent princes, of
your most abundant pittie haue com-
passion vpon him, & make him whole
that ye haue sore wounded vnto the
death, that it be not for euer layd vn-
to your cruelty & impetuous hart.

She answered him, go your waye
for at this tyme I will giue you none
answere thereof, and as hee hearde
that he toke his leaue and departed,
and the thirde daye hee wente to the
market, and bought a Gyrdle, that
was more in value, and costlier then

the chaplet was, and presented it to
 her on the behalf of Lodowike. And
 when she saw and beheld that so pre-
 cious, she said vnto Alexander, say to
 Lodowike & he come to my chamber
 about the thyrde houre in the nighte,
 and he shal finde the dore open, & Al-
 lexander hearing that was glad, &
 went to his fellow and said, my beste
 beloued fellow be of good comforte,
 for I haue conquered the mayden to
 you, and this night I shall bring you
 vnto her chamber, & when that was
 said, he started vp as though hee was
 wakened out of his slepe, & was wel
 reuiued, alid for great ioy hee was
 made hole, the next night following
 Alexander toke Lodowike, & brought
 him vnto the Chamber of the La-
 dy, with whome he was in solace, &
 ioye all the nighte, and fro that tyme
 forth, all her hart was vpon him, so
 & there was but one loue betwixte
 them both. And after that Lodo-
 wike

wike bled her oftentimes to visite, so
 that it came by processe of time to the
 eares of the knightes of the Courte,
 how that the Emperors Daughter
 was knowne by Lodowike, & con-
 spired amongst themselves how that
 they might therewith him fynde, and
 so to take him and slay him, as Alex-
 ander had knowledg thereof, hee
 armed him to withstande them, and
 when the knightes vnderstoode that
 they fearing Alexander, suffered his
 fellow to go in peace, and Alexander
 manye times put himselfe in ioper-
 tie for hym, he not knowing thereof,
 but the mayd knew it well. In short
 time after that there came letters to
 Alexander of the death of the King
 of Egypte, that hee should hastilye
 come and receiue his kingdome with
 honour and ioye, and that he wedde
 anone to þe maiden, & to Lodowike
 & also of his departing, whereof they
 were sorrowfull & heauy, hee said al-
 so

so vnto the mperour. My most doub-
 ted Lorde, please it you for to vn-
 derstand that I haue receiued Let-
 ters of the death of my father wher-
 fore it behoueth me to go and receiue
 the kingdome, & that yee will licence
 me to departe, & for all benefites to
 me done, I offer my selfe, and all my
 goodes, & rather then I should by my
 going, any way offende or displease
 you my Lord, I shall forsake all my
 realme, & all þ I haue in the worlde,
 & abyde with you still, then sayde the
 Emperour, know ye for certayne, þ of
 your departing I am righte heauye.
 for ye were vnto me the best seruant
 þ was in al my house, but it becom-
 meth not an Emperour to let his ser-
 uantes from their promotions, or
 aduancemētis, but soner to promote
 them vnto higher & greater honour.
 Therefore go yee vnto our treasurer,
 & he shall deliuer you as much golde
 as ye will haue, & in þ name of God
 and

and with my blessing go into youre
 Countrey, And thus Alexander had
 leaue of the Emperour, and bad him
 farwell, and many of the court were
 sorrowfull of his Departing, for of all
 hee was beloued, Lodowike with
 the maiden brought him on his way
 well. vii. myle, after that, Alexander
 would not suffer them to go further,
 then fell they both to the grounde for
 great sorrowe, and Alexander tooke
 and lift them both vp again from the
 earth, & comforted them with fayre &
 sweete words & said, O Lodowike
 my most best beloued felow, I warn
 you that the secretes being betwixte
 you & my Lady, ye hide them & keepe
 them as priuily as ye maye and take
 good heed to all thinges, for I wot
 another shal come and be in my stede
 that shall enuie you of the fauoure &
 grace, that ye stand in with the empe-
 rour, a day & night shal lie in a wayt
 to take you with a fault, and to put
 you

you to a rebuk. Then answered Lodo-
 dowike & said: O Alexander I shall
 beware as muche as to mee is possi-
 ble, but how shall I now doe when
 I want your company, therefore one
 thing I shall desire of you, & yee take
 this ring of me for a remembraunce,
 then saide he, I shall for the loue of
 you gladly receyue the ring, and yet
 should I neuer without the ring for-
 get you, & committing them to God.
 Then they embraced eache other a-
 bout the necke & kissed, & so departed
 fro other. Not long after & the kings
 Sonne of Spaine named Guido
 was receaued of & Emperour in the
 roome and place of Alexander to
 whome the stewarde assigned Alex-
 anders place and Chamber, which
 was very sore against & will of Lo-
 dowike, but he could not amende it.
 Guido perceiving & lodowik against
 his will had him in his fellowshipe
 anone he had enue against him, so
 Lodo-

Maysters.

Lodowike of a long tyme for feare of
the said Guido, kept him out of the
company of þe said mayd, neuertheles
afterwarde ouercome with the loue
of the mayden, sometime haunted, &
went againe to her; as he afore tyme
had done, Guido shortly perceiuing
þe same, waited so long therebp̃ þe
the troth knew, and was therefore in
surety that the mayden was by Lo-
dowike known, & had accompanied
with her. Upon a tyme it happened
that the Emperour stode in his hall
& praised Alexander of his gentlenes
and wisdom. That hearing Guy-
do, said my Lorde he is not so muche
worthye to bee commended, as ye
wene, for he hath bene a long while a
traitour in your house; then the Em-
perour said tell me how, Guido sayd
ye haue but one daughter onelye, the
which shall be your heyre, and that
Lodowike hath defouled & lyen by
her by the help of Alexander, and hee
goeth

The seven wyfe

goeth to her euery night whē it pleaseth him. And when the Emperoure heard that, he was sore mooued and waxed angry, & it happened Lodowike vppon the same time to come through the hal, & when the emperor saw him, he sayd, what heare I of thee þe euill and vittrue body, if it bee founde & proued true, thou shalt dy the most shammfull death that canne be deuised, Lodowike sayde, my Lorde the emperor what is the cause guido answered, I say & depose here before my Lord against thee, that thou hast defyled his ouely Daughter, and euery night thou goest to her & doest fornication with her, & that in battaile I shall prooue and make good vpon my body with thy bodye. Then said Lodowike, I am innocent, and not defectiue in the cryme, & falsely thou lvest vppon mee, and therevpon I hold thee battayle, & I trust to God thy falshood shall come vpon

Maysters.

vppon thyne owne heade. Then the
 Emperour assigned them the day of
 cobat. That done, Lodowike wente
 vnto the mayden, & shewed to her
 the cause of the day of battayle by the
 Emperoz assigned, & in what man-
 ner Guido had him accused, & said to
 hir. Nowe it behoueth mee to haue
 your counsell, or else I must dye, for
 why as you know it had not auailed
 me to haue again said y battel with-
 out I would haue yelded my self gil-
 ty, guido is strong & hardy in arms y
 his like is none but Alexander, & I am
 weake & feeble, & therefore if I holde
 the battaile agatnst him, I am but a
 dead man & so shal ye abide shame by
 rebuke. Then said she, do my coun-
 sell, in that ye mistrust your selfe, go
 hastilpe vnto my father, & saye to
 him that yee haue receiued Letters,
 whereby that ye are a certayned, y
 the Lorde your father is sore sicke, &
 lieth vpon his Death bed, & Desyret
 to

to see you & speak with your person,
 and to dispose his kingdome and his
 goods afore hee departe oute of this
 world, & desire his licence for the loue
 of your father, that you mighte goe &
 visite him, & that he will prolong and
 length the day of battayle that in the
 meane season you may go and come
 & whē yee haue obtained his licence,
 as hastily as you may secretly go to
 King Alexander, and when yee are
 come to him, take him apart, & shew
 him the cause of your conuning, and
 requyre him in this your vtter extre-
 mitie, that he will vs helpe and ayde
 And when p Lodowiki had heard
 hir counsel, it pleased him well, & did
 thereafter, his leaue gotten, & longer
 day & respect of the battayle prefixed
 & assigned, hee departed and toke his
 iourney towardes the Realme of E-
 gypt, and neuer stayd day nor nighte
 till hee came vnto King Alexanders
 castell, and when that King Alexan-
 der

der had vnderstanding of his coming, he was much glad, and went to mete him and receiued him honorably, & had wonder of his coming. Then said Lodowike. O my deare Lord & my best beloued friende, my life & my death is in your handes for as ye said to me afore that I shoulde haue another fellow, & which shoulde lie in a waight to espie me, and to destroy me, without I looked & more wisely to my selfe. So as long as I might, I absented me, till & I coulde no lenger, but afterwarde the kings sonne of Spaine making watche so long on me, till that he perceiued the truth, in the end he accused mee vnto the Emperour, so that from this day vnto the eighte daye hereafter prescribed, it behooueth me to fight with him body against bodye, and as yee knowe well, hee is a strong and a hardy mā, and I am weake & feeble & therefore hath I florentine counsel-

led me þ I shuld not hide this matter
 from you , for shee knoweth you for
 a faithfull friend, & that yee woulde
 not leaue vs in this necessity , then
 said Alexander, is there any bodye þ
 knoweth of your coming vnto me
 for this matter, more thē florentine,
 he answered him & said, no creature
 liuing, for I tooke leaue of the empe-
 ror to go and visite my father liuing
 greuously sick, then asked Alexan-
 der him, what counsell hath floren-
 tine giuen to you, howe, and in what
 wise I might helpe you. He sayde, O
 moste constant and faythfull friend
 in this wise he hath counsailed mee,
 considering that we be like, that ye
 should come & doe the battayle with
 hym, no man shall know you , but
 shee, and the battayle done, I shal
 come againe to the courte, and ye to
 your contrey. Then he asked when
 the day should be of the battayle , &
 he sayd this day. viii. dayes. The said
 Alexan-

Alexander, if I should this day tary,
 then can I not come to that day pre-
 fixed. Therefore see what I shall do,
 I have bidden al my subiects; that to-
 morow they should come to my wed-
 ding & briddall, & if I should go, then
 is the day lost, if I go not and do the
 battaile, then Florentine, and yee are
 both vndone, what thinke yee now
 best for to do, when Lodowike hard
 that, he fel to the earth, and began to
 sigh & sorrow out of measure, saying
 sorrow & heauines come to me on al
 sides. Then said Alexander vnto him,
 be of good comfort, for I shall not for-
 sake you after such a sort, though I
 should leese my lyfe & kingdome, but
 harken what I haue thought, in so
 much as we are both lyke, so that the
 one of vs cannot be known from the
 other, but we both together, & I am
 not yet greatly knowne here, but my
 barrons, & other folke shall take you
 for me, therefore here shall ye abide &

carry & marry my wife in my steede,
 & hold the feast and bridale, and do
 in all thinges, as though I were
 there my selfe presente, excepte when
 as yee come to bedde with my wyfe,
 looke that ye be there true and sayth
 full, & I shall without taryng goe &
 take my horse & ride thether, where-
 as the battaile shall be, & if God giue
 me the victory & I maye ouertome &
 banquishe your enemye I shal come
 againe secretely, and ye shall goe a-
 gaine to your beste beloued. This
 done, Alexander bad Lodowick far-
 well, and toke his iourney towardes
 the Emperors court, for to fight and
 doe the battaile with Guydo, & Lo-
 dowike abode in Egypt, in the steede
 of King Alexander, and vpon the
 next morning came Lodowike, as
 thoughe it had beene King Alexan-
 der, and solemnely in the face of the
 Church espoused Alexanders wyfe
 and solemnised the Mariage feast
 with

maysters.

with great royaltie of Delicates and
precious meats, and plenty of al ma-
ner of wines, and diuers melodies of
instrumentes of musicke, and made
great ioy and cheare of the noble mē
& of all other people that there was
assembled. And when the night was
come he went to bed with y^e queene,
and laide betwixte him and her a na-
ked Sword, whereof she had greate
wonder, but nothing she sayde, and
so hee laye with her euerye nighte as
long as Alexander was oute. The
King Alexander at y^e dape that was
prefixed & set, came vnto the Empe-
rour and said. O moste Souerayne
Lorde it is so, that I haue lefte my
father right sicke. Neuerthlesse I
am come for to defende my honour
and my promise to performe. Them-
perour said ye doe right wel, and ac-
cording to a noble man, and fortune
shall fauoure you in youre iuste and
righteous quarel. And when them-

P.iii.

perours

perours daughter vnderstoode that
 Alexander was come, anone she sent
 for him, & when he was come to her
 she embraced him, & with ioye and
 gladnes she kist him and blessed the
 tyme that she might see him againe, &
 demaunded him where he had lefte
 her friend & louer Lodowike, then
 he declared vnto her all the processe
 and how he had left him king in his
 realme, and toke his leaue of her, and
 went to Lodowiks chamber, & there
 was no creature that thoughte other
 wise but it was Lodowike on lyfe ex-
 cept florentine, the next day follo-
 wing, before Alexander wente vnto
 the battaile, he sayd vnto the Em-
 perour in presence of Guido, my moste
 redoubted Soueraigne Spide, this
 Guido hath falsely & butruly accu-
 sed mee vnto your noble grace, that
 I shold be of such aquauntance with
 your daughter, that should bee vnto
 the dishonour of your most noble per-
 son

son and hers, & vnto that I sweare
 & affyrme by the holy Euangelistes y
 she was neuer in such maner of wise
 by me knowne, as he hath to you al-
 ledged and informed, and that this
 day with the ayde and helpe of God
 I shall proue and make good vppon
 his body. Then said Guido, yet once
 I say againe and swere by the holye
 Euangelists, & by all that God hath
 made, y thou haste had knowledge
 & hast doctored the Emperors Daugh-
 ter, and that I shall make good
 vppon thy heade, wherevppon they
 lept vpon their coursers, and fiercely
 ranne together with their Speares,
 that they both brake and shiuered in
 peeces, and drew their swordes, and
 fought long together, till at the last
 Alexander with a great mighte and
 strength at one stroke smote of Guy-
 does heade, and sent it to the Em-
 perors daughter, whereof shee was
 right glad, & bare it to her father,

and said : father behold the heade of
him þ you & mee hath so falsly Defa-
med. When þ the Emperour percey-
ued þ victory, anone he sent for Alex-
ander whome hee thoughte to haue
ben Lodowik & sayd. ¶ Lodowike
this day your honour & my Daugh-
ters ye haue saued ye shall stand & be
to morrow in my grace & fauoure, &
whatsoeuer he be that hereafter shall
again Defame you, he shall for euer
stand in my indignation, Alexander
answered god helpes & saueth them
þ trusteth in him, & alway wretheth
þ blood vndefectiue or innocent, but
now most redoubted Lorde, of one
thing I requyre you at my departing
fro my father I left him for sicke, &
it will like you for to licēe me to goe
and see how it standeth with him, &
if that he be any thing amended, I
shall incontinent come againe, then
the emperour said, that pleaseth mee
well, but ye may in no manner wyle
leane

maylters.

leauue me, from henceforth I cannot be
without your presence, Alexander toke
leauue of the emperour, & bad him far-
well & rode agayne vnto his Realme
who when Lodowik sawe, he made
great chere & gladnes, & right friend-
ly receiued him & said: O moste true
friend of all friendes, tell me how yee
haue done, and sped in your iorney
and neede, and what ende yee haue
brought it to, then sayd he, go to the
emperour, & serue as ye haue donne
before, I haue gottē you more grace
& fauour of him then euer yee hadde
afore time. And I haue also smit-
ten of the head of your enemy and
aduersary. Then said Lodowike, ye
haue not only at this tyme saued my
lyfe, but many times heretofore,
the which as yet I cannot deserue,
but God reward you, and so depar-
ted, and went agayne to the emperour
and there was no man that knew of
the absence of Alexander, saue onely

Lo-

The Seuen wyfe

Lodowike, & when as the night was
come, he went to bed wth the Queene,
& alone he had wth hir sweete and
friendly wordes, & her embraced, and
kisse. Then said she, you haue made
this time all to long, in þe hase she
wed nothing of friendshippe or loue;
how may this be? Then sayde her,
wherfore say ye that? she sayd enery
night as I was in my bed, þee haue
layde betwixte you and me, anaked
sword, & ye haue neuer tasted or tur-
ned you toward me, more th^{an} howe.
And when the king heat wth h^{er}, he
thought on the treach^{er} of his fellowe,
and said vnto her, O my most deare
Lady & Queene, it was not done for
none euill w^{ill}, but for a good pro-
bation, & for a perpetuall loue. But
she thought wth her selfe, that some day
ye neuer more haue of mee; but that
dispite she thought, I shall challenge
vpon the. Then was there a straunge
y^e she as yet had a terrible & fauour
vnto

maysters.

vnto, and shee began for to loue him
more & more, so long till at the laste
they thought and imagined, how
they mighte destroy & slea the king,
and therefore they got porson, & por-
soned the king, so that if hee had not
bene right strong of complexion, hee
had died thereof, but it wroughte in
him so sore, that it causeth him to bee
a most foule & horrible Leaper, that
euer was seene vppon earth. The
Lordes & noble men of his Realme,
and the Quene also seeing this, de-
spised him and said, that it behooued
not a leaper to raigne vppon vs, for
he should not procure nor ingender
any fayre or cleane heires. And so hee
was deposed of the Dignitie royall,
and driuen out of his realme. In the
meane time died the Emperoure of
Rome, & Lodowike wedded y^e dau-
ghter, and after that Lodowikes fa-
ther died, so that Lodowike raigned
both Emperour and king of Fraunce
at

at once. When king Alexander hard
 þe thought in himselfe. Nowe my
 fellowe reigneth together vppon the
 empire & realme of Fraunce, to whō
 may I better go then to him, for whō
 many times I haue aduentured my
 life, & vpon a nighte he rose vp, and
 made him ready and tooke with him
 his staffe & clapper, & went toward
 the emperours countrey, and when
 he was come nigh to the gate, hee set
 him amongst other lazers, abyding
 the giuing of the Almes, and on a
 season as the emperour went oute of
 his pallaice, all the pore lazers be-
 gan to ring their clappers, and the
 good king Alexander did lyke the
 other, but there was no almes giuen
 to them. He taried so long vnto the
 time that the Emperour was set, &
 serued at the table. Then went king
 Alexander vnto the gate, & knocked
 thereat, & the porter asked who was
 there. Alexander answered him, I
 am

maysters.

am a poore dispised man, but for the
loue of God I requyre you, that yee
turn not your sight from my bylage,
& that yee will for the reward of God,
doe my message vnto the emperour,
he asked what is the matter? Alex-
ander saide, go and tell him here is a
lazer that right horrible is to see, the
which prayeth him for þe loue of God
& king Alexander þe he will graunte
him this day to eate his Alms before
him vpon the Earth, in his Hall,
The porter saide, I wonder that yee
dare desire þe of my Lorde, for why
all the hall is full of Lordes and no-
ble men, and if they behold you, they
shoulde all abhorre and leaue their
meate, but for so much as yee haue
requyred me so profoundely, for the
loue of God, I shall goe and do your
errande, whatsoeuer happen there-
of, and so he went forth before the
Emperour & did his message, when
the Emperour herd the porter name
Alex-

Alexander & king of Egypt, he sayde
to his porter go bring him afore mee
howe horrible that soeuer his visage
be, and ordaine him a place before me
that he may eate his meat before me,
in my presence. The porter broughte
him in anon, & ordayned him a place
and sette him to meate, before the
Emperour, and when hee was well
refreshed, hee saide vnto one of the
Emperours seruantes. My deare
friende, doe mee this errande to the
Emperour, say vnto him that I pray
him for the loue of God, & king Alex-
ander, & he will send me his cuppe of
wine. The seruaint sayd for the loue
of God I shall do it, but I beleue it
will not bee, for if ye once drinke of
my lords cup, he will no more drinke
of the same, neuertheless hee did the
errande. Anone as the Emperoure
heard him name King Alexander, he
commaunded his cup to be filled of
the best wine, and bare it to him, the
which

which wine when hee had receiued,
 he put it into his bottell, and toke his
 ring that Lodowicke had giuen to
 him, and put into the cup, and sente
 it againe to the Emperour, & when the
 Emperour saw the ring, anone hee
 knewe it was the same that hee had
 geuen to Alexander in friendshippe,
 when he departed fro him, & thoughte
 in his heart that Alexander is deade
 or else this man is maruailously come
 to the ring, & commaunded anone
 that the lazer should not depart vnto
 the time hee had spoken with him,
 for in no wise hee could haue know-
 ledge of him, nor yet repute him for
 Alexander. After that the Dinner
 was donne & ended, the Emperoure
 tooke the sick man aparte, & asked
 how he came by the ring. Alexan-
 der demaunded if he knew well the
 ring. The Emperour saide, I know
 it right well. Alexander sayde, wote
 yee also to whome you haue giuen
 it.

it. The emperour saide **I** wote right
 well, how is it then saide Alexander,
 & ye know not me, for **I** am Alexan-
 der to whom ye haue giuen the same
 ring, when the emperour hard **þ**, he fel
 down to **þ** ground for sorow, & tare
 & rent his robes & clothes, and with
 great sighings & bewaylinges saide
O Alexander, ye bee the one halfe of
 my soule, where is your goodly and
 delicate body now so vncleane and
 wretchedly infected, that was so
 fayre and pleasaunt to behold, he an-
 swered this is to me happened, for **þ**
 great fidilitie that yee haue done to
 me in my bed with my wife, when
 you layde a naked sworde betwixte
 you and her, wherefore shee became
 woith & hated me, & shee & a knyghte
 & afore time she ought her loue vnto,
 haue impoysoned me as yee maye see
 and moreouer they haue driven mee
 out of my Realme, & when the Em-
 peroꝝ hard that, he for loue toke him
 about

about the neck and kissed him, and
saide. O my moste intyrelly beloued
brother, I sorrowe to see you in this
great sickness and miseries, woulde
God I might die for you, but my
most deare friend suffer patientlye a
little tyme, till that we haue sente for
all the Physitions and wyle maisters
in Physicke, to haue their counsell, &
advice, if there be any remedy or hope
of recouering of your health, and if
it be possible to helpe you, wee shall
neither spare expyze, lordshippe, nor
other good temperall, to make you
hole & sound, in the meane whyle he
was brought into a fayre Chamber,
richely apparelled, and appointed of
all maner of things y^e were requisite
and necessary for his ease and health
& in al hast he sent his messengers by
all parts of the world, for the experte
and most wise phisitions that might
be founde. Of whome within a mo-
neth were come & assembled before

D.i.

the

the Emperoure .xxx. the which were
 right expert & subtile in that science.
 To whome the Emperour sayde, my
 welbeloued maisters, I haue a frind
 that greenouslye is infected with a
 leprie, whome I woulde right fayne
 were healed and made sounde, and
 nothing thereon to spare, neither for
 gold ne siluer, nor al the other goods
 that I haue in this worlde, but I
 would giue it to recouer his health.
 The Maisters answered and sayde,
 all that euer is possible to be done by
 phisick, & ye shall soone vnderstande,
 after that we haue seene the person,
 and forthwith as they had seene him
 and perceiued the cause & matter of
 the infirmitie, they iudged & disease
 vncurable, for all the maysters ly-
 uing, and when the Emperour hearde
 that, he was right sorry in his harte,
 & committed it vnto the helpe of al-
 mighty God, calling vnto him Reli-
 gious men, & pore people & other de-
 uoute

uout persons, & desired them to pray
to God that hee would vouchsafe to
make hole his friend, the sooner for
their good deedes and prayers, & he
himself with many other fasted and
prayed humbly to almighty God for
þ health of his friend, vpon a day as
king Alexander was in his prayers
there came vnto him a voyce saying,
if the mperoz will w his owne hands
slea his two sonnes, which his wife
hath borne by him at one burthen, &
wash þ body with the blood of them,
thy body and thy flesh shall be as fair
& cleane as þ flesh of þ little chyl dren
when king Alexander had hearde
this, he thought in himselfe, this by-
sion is not expediente to bee shewod,
for it is soze against nature, that any
man shoulde slea his owne sonne for
reouerung of the health of a strange
man. The Emperoz night & day laye
in his prayers with greate deuotion,
and prayed to god for the remedye of

king Alexander. So that at the last there came a voice vnto him, & sayde, how long shall ye thus cry & call vpon me, when it is open shewed and notified vnto Alexander, how that he shall be made hole. The emperour hearing that, went vnto Alexander and said. Of all friendes the best and most true, blessed be the moste highe God, the which neuer fayleth them & call and trust vpon him, of whom I haue knowledg, that it is shewed vnto you how and in what wise that ye may be made hole, wherefore I pray you that ye will it openly shew vnto me, that wee may ioy together, and if ye neede any thing therto, that I may doe, I shall fulfill it vnto my power, and for your health giue all that I haue, Alexander sayd. Syr I dare not shew it to you, how that I maye be cured or healed of my maladie, for it exceedeth, and it is a thing against nature for to be done, there-
fore

fore I will not shew it to you, howe
 be it I haue great trust & confidence
 in you. The emperor sayd, Alexander
 trust in me, for whatsoener is possi-
 ble for to be done for the recouering
 of your health, I shall doe it & there-
 fore hide nothing from me, then sayd
 Alexander, I haue of God know-
 ledge, & if ye will slea your ii. sonnes
 with your own hands, & washe me
 in their blood I should be hole, and
 therefore I haue not shewed it vnto
 you, for me thinketh it is agaynst na-
 ture, that the father should slea his
 owne Children for the health of a
 strange man, the emperor said, saye not
 & ye be a strange man, for I loue you
 as I do my selfe, & therefore if I had
 ten chyldren, I shoulde not spare one
 alque to haue your health, after that
 the Emperor watched and spied his
 time, when & Empresse & all the La-
 dies and chamberers were out of the
 way, and when time was, he entred

into the chamber whereas the Child-
 dren slept, & drew out his knife, and
 cut a sunder both their throtes, and
 gathered the blood in a vessell, and
 then he bathed & washed Alexander
 and when he was bathed, his bodye
 and fleshe was as fayre, & as cleane
 as though it had beene of a young
 Chylde. Then the Emperoure had
 knowledge of his visage, and kissed
 him saying. O good Alexander, now
 I see you in the same fourme whiche
 I haue often times delighted in.
 Blessed be God that euer I had these
 children, by whom ye be holpen, and
 made hole, & ytt wiste noman of the
 death of the Children, saue onely the
 Emperour and Alexander, and when
 as the Emperour saw that Alexan-
 der was perfectly healed, he said un-
 to him, I shall ordaine to you an ho-
 nest company, and ye shall go from
 hence. x. miles, the next day send un-
 to me a messenger, and shew openlye
 vnto

vnto me of your conning, & I shall
 then with all solemnitie come & mete
 you, and ye shal abide with me vnto
 þ time þ we may otherwile proude
 for þ recouerig of your realme. This
 counsel pleased Alexander right wel,
 and according to the same was done
 for on þ next day came þ Messenger
 vnto the emperor shewing him þ com-
 ming of king Alexander, and when
 þ Empress heard that she was right
 glad, & said vnto the emperor, O my
 Lorde, haue ye not nowe a cause of
 great ioy, þ king Alexander is nowe
 conning, whome ye of a long time
 haue not seene, and if it please you to
 goe & meete him with youre Lordes
 and seruantes, I shall followe you
 with my Ladyes, and Gentlewo-
 men, and yet wist she not the Death
 of the Chyldren. Then rode they
 forth with a greates companye, and
 mette with the kinge Alexander,
 and when they mette together with

great reuerence and honour they re-
 ceived him, and with great gladnesse
 and ioye, they brought him into the
 pallaice, & when the time of Dinner
 was come Alexander was set at the
 table betwixt the Emperoz, and the
 Empres, & all the chere that she could
 make shee did to him, and when the
 Emperour perceiued that, hee was
 right well pleased and said, O myne
 o'one florentine, I ioye aboue all
 things y^e ye do & make to King Alex-
 ander so good cheare, then saide shee,
 wherfore should I not, is not his co-
 pany to vs both ioy and gladnes, but
 more to you my Lorde, for this digni-
 tie that ye are in, by him ye are pro-
 moted, & manye times hee hath saued
 you from the death. The Emperoure
 said, then I pray you mine o'one flo-
 rentine that ye will take heede to my
 wordes that I shall say to you, saue
 ye not that foule lazer, which the last
 day sat before our table, and prayde
 me

me for the loue of God, & King Alexander, & I woulde giue him drinke, she sayd: My Lord I saw him well, a more horrible man I neuer beheld then sayd the Emperoz, I demaund now this of you, I put case that hee were king Alexander, and that he in any wise could not bee made hole but with the blood of your sonnes, the whiche yee in one daye broughte into this world, woulde yee not that their blood were shed, that he mighte bathe him therein, to the intente & by & same he might haue perfite health, as ye nowe see him in. She saide my Lord, wherefore demaund ye mee & question: I say, & let you haue knowledge of troth, & if I had ten sonnes, I should gladly slea them with mine owne handes, to prepare and ordayne for him a bathe, and shoulde washe him therein myne owne selfe, rather then I should leue him in such perill, for God mighte well sende vs
mo

mo children, but suche a true friende
 were a thing as impossible for vs to
 recouer or finde, when the Emperour
 hard this of her, he was wel content
 & pleased in his mind, & sayd, O wyfe
 had ye leuer haue your childre deade
 then Alexander shuld be in the sick-
 nes of leproy, therefore shall I open &
 shew you now þ troth of the matter,
 that foule lazer the whiche yee sawe
 was Alexander that sitteth heare, &
 by that manner he is made whole,
 with the blood of our sonnes, & they
 are dead, as þ emperesse hard that, she
 began to sorow, as nature woulde,
 although shee had sayde afore, that
 she had leauer see her Children dead,
 then she would suffer Alexander in
 such paine. The Nourishers of the
 Children vnderstanding this, with
 great crying and weeping, went
 to the nourserye, or chamber of them
 and great sorowe and bewayplyng
 was made through the Emperoures
 courte

courte for his sonnes, and when the
nourishers came to the chamber, they
found the Children playing and sing-
ging a song, and prayse to the father
and the sonne, and the holy ghost, for
restoring againe of their lyfe, & then
wente they againe in all haste vnto
the Emperour, and shewed him that
his sonnes were liuing, and that a-
bout their throats there as they were
cutte they haue a circle of threede of
Golde, and thereof was greate ioye
and gladnesse in all the courte, and
gaue thanks vnto almightye God
for that greate myracle and woun-
drous worke. After that the Em-
perour with a great multitude, and
company of people gathered and as-
sembled & went with Alexander in-
to Egypt, and set him againe into his
royaltie, and possession of his realme
and the Queene with the knight
which liued together in aduoutry hee
caused them both to bee brente, and
when

when this was done, the emperoure
 had one onely sister, tohome hee gaue
 Alexander to be his wyfe, and when
 king Alexander had all his Realme
 obtained again, and was set in good
 rest & peace, the Emperoure wente a-
 gaine into his Empryre, & the king
 Alexander right wisely and manlye
 gouerned himselfe in his Affayres, so
 that hee ouercame all his Ennemies,
 and Rebels. And when hee was in
 al his glory peace and might, hee had
 thought and minde vpon his father
 and mother, by tohome he was caste
 into the sea, whiche dwelled in farre
 parties, from thence he sente to them
 a Messenger, & let them haue know-
 ledge, that the king of Egypte vppon
 such a daye would bee with them to
 eate and drinke, and to make good
 chere, and when the messenger was
 come to the, they receiued hym with
 great ioy, and with giftes largelye
 to him giuen, and sente him agayne
 say-

saying that their seruices shoulde be
 readye at all times to doe the King
 pleasure, but that could they neuer by
 power fully deserue, that he woulde
 vouchsafe to shew them that honoure
 whereto they were not worthy, for
 to come to them to eate & drinke, and
 sport him, the Messenger wente a-
 gaine vnto the king, & shewed howe
 gladly that they would receiue him,
 & what rewarde they had giuen him,
 & how faithfull they were, and redy
 to doe him seruice, at his commaun-
 dement, wherewith the king was
 contente. And when the Daye was
 come & was prefixed, the king with
 a fayre company rode towarde his
 fathers house, the which was to the
 knight his father, and to his mother,
 vnknoen that he was their Sonne.
 When the king was come nigh vnto
 his fathers castell, the knight rode
 to receiue & meete him, and when hee
 came nigh vnto the king, hee disce-
 ded

ded from his horse, & reuerenced him
 with his knee on þe earth, but þe king
 toke him vp shortly, & commaunded
 him to ascend againe vpon his Horse
 & rode so together cheeke by Cheeke
 vnto the castel. And when they were
 come thither, þe mother came to him
 & fell vpon her knees to the earth, &
 welcommed him gladly. The king
 tooke her louingly vp, and kissed her
 right friendly, & she said: my most ho-
 norable lord, ye do vnto vs vnworthy
 great honoure with the presence of
 your persō most honorable, þe whiche
 we neuer more can deserue, after the
 meat was al ready, & the time of the
 day was come to go to dinner, þe fa-
 ther came with a basen & an ewer, &
 the mother with a towell, saying, sye
 all thinges are ready, please it you
 to wash, & when the king sawe that,
 he smiled and said to himselfe. Now
 is the song of the Nightingale true
 for my father and my mother shoulde
 gladlye

gladly fulfill as I haue sayde, if that
 I my selfe would thereto consente, &
 suffer them for to doe it, but he would
 not suffer them for to doe to him such
 seruice, saying: your age is for to
 be honoured and worshipped, and
 therefore I will none of it, and cal-
 led vnto him one of his seruants, the
 whiche serued him thereof. Then
 sayd the knight, ye will not suffer vs
 to do it for our honour, for wee are
 not worthy thereto. The King sayde
 haue not I sayd, that for your age I
 forbear you it, when the king was
 sette at the table, he set his Mother
 on the right hande of him, & his fa-
 ther on his lefte syde, and they as
 muche as they might behelde his vi-
 sage and countenaunce. The dinner
 ended, the king entred into a Cham-
 ber, and made the knight with his
 Ladye come into him, and com-
 maunded all other to awayde, and
 when they were thus alone, the king
 sayde

said vnto them, haue ye no childzen?
They answered, we haue neither
sonne ne daughter, and the king sayd
had ye neuer none, the knight answered,
wee haue one Sonne, but hee is
long agoone dead. The king asked of
what death died he, the knight sayde
a natural death. Then sayd the king
if I maye otherwise knowe that hee
died, then are ye found with a faulte.
Then asked the knight. My Lorde,
wherfore enquire you thus after our
sonne. The king answered, y doe I
not without cause, & therefore I wil
know of what death he dyed, and
if ye will not tell me, I shal cause you
to die a shamefull death, when they
hard þ, they fell to the grounde vpon
their knees afore him, and asked him
mercy, and forgiveness of their liues.
The king woulde not suffer them to
kneele, but shortly tooke them by
said, to that intente came I not into
your house, to eate your breade, and
be-

Maysters.

betray you, but say me the truth
and ye shall be saued, for it is giuen
me to vnderstand that you haue put
him to death, and if that ye come in
iudgement, ye must die a shamefull
death. Then said the knight: Lorde
pardon me my lyfe, and I shall shew
you the verie trouthe. The King
saide feare not, for I shall doe to you
no harme. Then said she, Souerayne
Lord we had a son only y^e was wyse
& lettered, & right well vnderstood.
And vppon a time as hee stode afore
vs & sctued at the table there came a
flyingeale y^e right swertely song,
whose song he began to interprete, &
tell vs what it ment, & said, this byrd
singeth that I shall become so greate
& mighty a Lord, that it shall bee to
your honour and aduancement in
such wise ye my father shall bee glad
to hold y^e baken with water to walsh
in my hands, & my mother y^e to well,
if that I wold suffer it. And when I

R. i.

heard

hard that I was sore moued & tooke
 & cast him into the sea for to drowne
 him. Then saide the king, what euill
 might haue come to you if he had ben
 made so great and mighty, me thin-
 keth it should haue bene your honour
 & profite, þ knight said: Lorde it was
 no reason but a woodnesse. The king
 answered, that was a great foolish-
 nes of you that ye would do against
 the ordinaunce and will of God, but
 now yee shall know for troth I am
 your son, that ye cast into the sea, &
 God of his great mercy and goodnes
 hath saued me, and by his grace hath
 brought me out, to this estate & dig-
 nity, & the father & mother hering þ
 with feare & ioy replenished fell flat
 to the ground whome he louingly, and
 friendly tooke vp, saying, feare not
 but rather be glad and ioyous, for
 ye shall nothing suffer, but my exal-
 tation shall bee your glorie and ioye
 and profite, and kiste both his fa-
 ther

Maysters.

ther and mothet with great ioye and gladnes, then began the mother to wepe. Then said the King weepe not but be of good cheare for in my realme ye shall bee honoured aboue mee, During my life, & toke them with him into his realme, where they dwelled together in honor and ioy, and ended their dayes with ioy and myrth.

Here followeth the Application of the Example to propose.

Then said the Emperoures sonne, Lord ye haue vnderstand what I haue sayd. The Emperour said right well. Then said the sonne. My moste honourable and redoubted father, although that God hath giuen and endued me with wisdom and vnderstanding aboue any other I shuld not be in appayring of your honoure & might, but more for the preservation of the same. So in likewyse the Kinges maiestie, whiche was nothing to the hinderance of his father,

13.ii.

but

The seuen vyle

but rather for his worship and profit
for as long as they liued, they were
honoured in his realme. Then sayd
the Emperour my deare sonne I will
all hole resigne to you the Empyre to
gouerne, for I perceiue well by your
narration that ye haue to mee declar-
ed, that it is best to mee, and mooste
for mine ease, that I leaue this busi-
nes and labour, and take me to more
rest, for I am olde and feeble, the son
answered his father, My Lorde fa-
ther, so shall it not be, but as long as
ye liue ye shal haue the authouty and
might of the Empyre to do and com-
maunde as it appertaineth vnto an
Emperour, but in all businesse I are
laborous I will alwayes bee readye
to minister and to serue you, accor-
ding to my duty.

Howe the iudgementes was giuen vp-
on the Empreffe, and how she and
her best beloue were put
to death.

Then

maisters.

Then commaunded the Emperour
that iustice to sit in Iudgemente;
and bring againe the Empresse be-
fore them with their Ladies, and the
Ribaude her best beloued clothed in
vesture of a woman, the which he
made to stand nexte vnto her, then
the Emperours sonne asked a sentence
and iudgement vpon them saying.

O Lord father as ye be Emperoure
of all the worlde, and your maiestye
and power requireth to doe true ius-
tice vnto all people that desyre it.

Now demaunde I that ye this daye
giue right sentēce, & to do true iudge-
ment vppon the vntroth, falshood, &
shame to me put & alledged by them-
presse, for the whiche, I haue seuen
times be led vnto the gallowes, and
haue stand in great ieoperdy & perill
of my life. And also y^e shee vnttrue vi-
to you hath bene of her body, as yee
haue sene by good proofe made before
you, vpo the which I ask iudgement
and

The seven wyle

and therfore command your iustices
to haue sentence therevpon acozding
to right & law, anone as the emperesse
hard this she fell flat to the earth be-
fore the emperour and asked merce
and forgiuenes, but it helpeth ne pro-
fiteth nothing, for the sonne woulde
haue right, and desyzed iudgemente.
Then spake the Iustices, her owne
deedes condemneth her, & the port of
hir leman by her found, therefore we
giue sentence againste the Emperesse
that she shall bee bounde to an horse
taile, & drawen through all þe streetes
of the cittie vnto the place of executiō
and there to be brent, & we iudge also
& giue sentence against the ribaude, þe
he shalbe quartred & smitten in pee-
ces, and his flesh cast vnto the houn-
des and byrdes of the ayre for to de-
uoure him, and this sentence was
approbate and allowed of all people.
Hereafter in short time died the Em-
perour, & Dioclesian his son gouer-
ned

Maysters.

ned and ruled the myrre with greate
wisedome and helde and kepte his
Maysters with him in great honour,
and glory. By whose counsaile and
wisedome he gouerneth the empyre,
that he excelled all his Predecessors
in riches, & doing iustice and right.
And his Maysters loued him aboue
all other thinges in the worlde. So
þ manye tymes they put themselues
in great perrill and ieoperdie of their
liues for him. And so they en-
ded their dayes in great ioy
and honor, and com-
mended them to
almightye
God.

FFNIS.



Imprinted at London by
Thomas Purfoote dwelling in
Paules Churchyard at the signe
of the Lucrece.

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